



DC
COMICS™

24

SCOTT
SNYDER

GREG
CAPULLO

DANNY
MIKI

ZERO YEAR

BATMAN

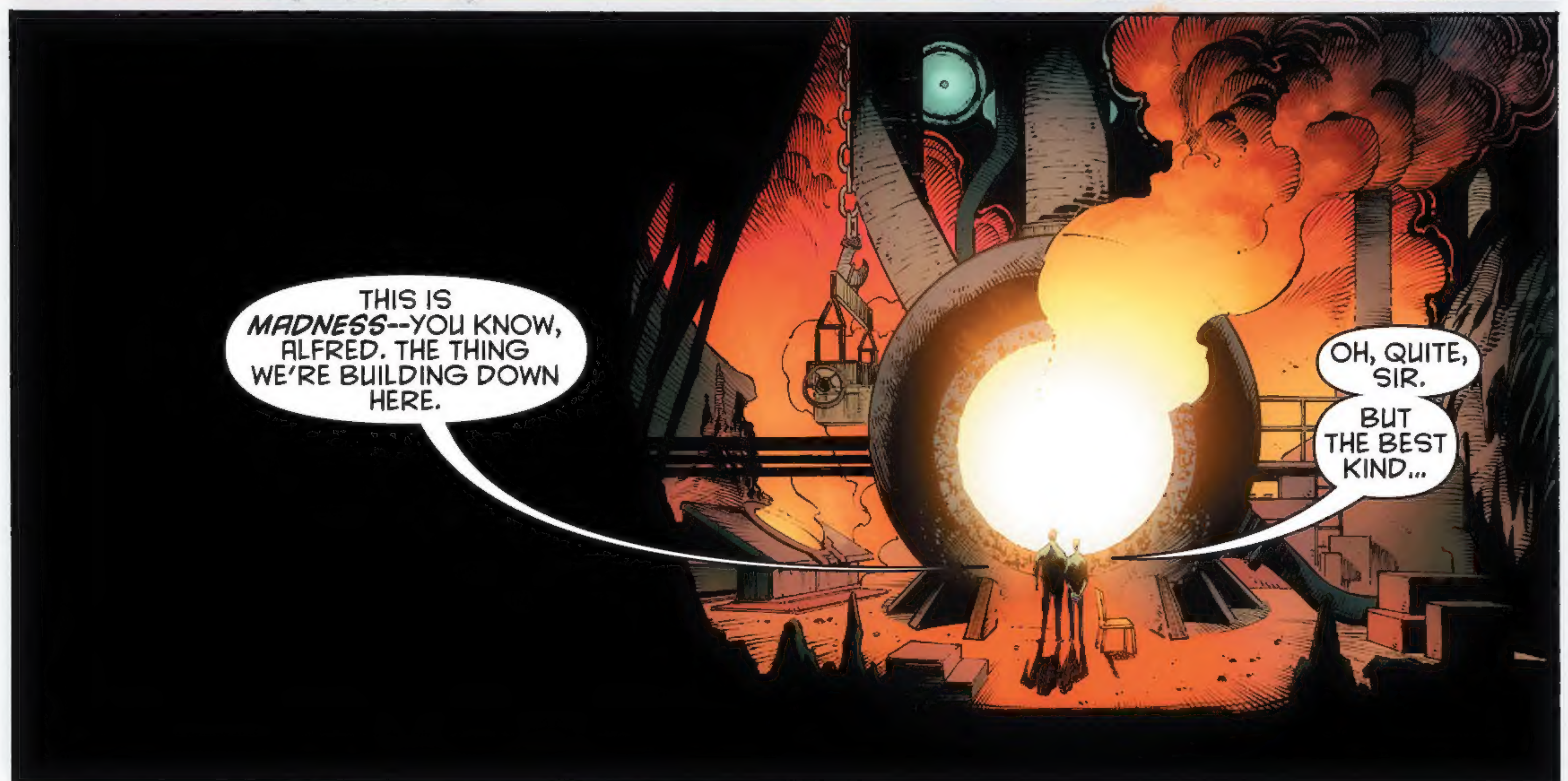
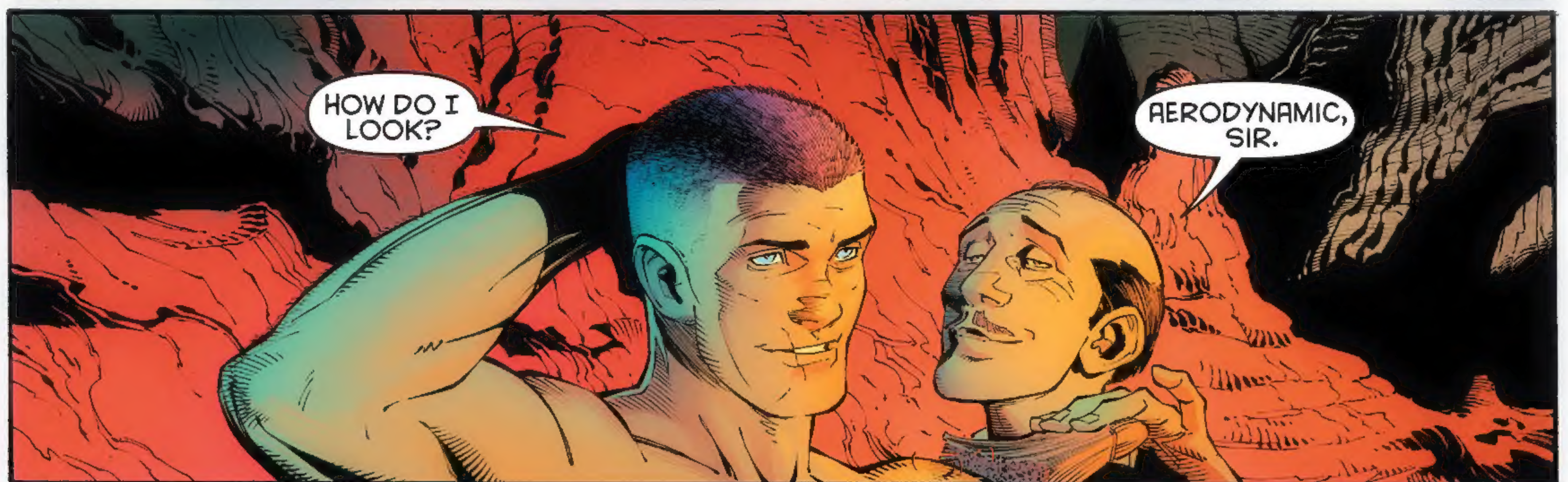
THE NEW 52!



DEC 2013

RATED **T** TEEN

DCCOMICS.COM



"...THE KIND THIS CITY REWARDS."

WELCOME TO
GOTHAM, GREATEST
CITY IN THE
COUNTRY!

COME ON,
TAKE THE
DAMN THING
ALREADY.

I'M GETTING OLD WAITING
ON YOU.

SLOW DOWN,
WILL YOU? IT'S
PRESSURIZED GAS.
YOU BANG IT AROUND
LIKE THAT AND THE
COOLING DISK WILL
FALL OFF AND--

AND WHAT? IT'S
OXYGEN. WE'LL ALL
BREATHE A LITTLE
CLEANER IS ALL.

STOP
IT!

HEH.
I'M JUST
KIDDING. WHAT
ARE YOU,
ANYWAY, A
CHEMIST?

CLANG
CLANG

AS A MATTER OF
FACT, I AM. SO
YOU KNOW, I'M
A HIGH SCHOOL
CHEMISTRY
TEACHER IN THE
NARROWS AND--

WHOA! **WHOA!**
I DON'T WANT TO
KNOW, MAN. WHAT
THE HELL'S
WRONG WITH
YOU? YOU KNOW
THE **RULES.**

I'M SORRY.
I'M JUST...LET'S
JUST GET THIS
OVER WITH. THE
POLICE HAVE AN
EASY VIEW OF US
UP HERE.

POLICE, **EHP?** I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
SCARED OF. **HE'S** COMING TO GET
YOU, SCHOOLTEACHER! COMING
TO GET US ALL!

LOOK, I HEARD
HE TOOK **SEVEN** OF
US DOWN LAST NIGHT.
I HAVE A FAMILY...I WAS
BLACKMAILED INTO
THIS, MAN. MY IDENTITY
GETS OUT THERE, AND
I CAN'T--

THE COPS
MADE HIM UP.
OR THE FALCONES
AS A HAIL MARY.
GET OVER IT.

BELIEVE ME,
THERE'S **NOTHING**
LURKING IN THE
SHADOWS.

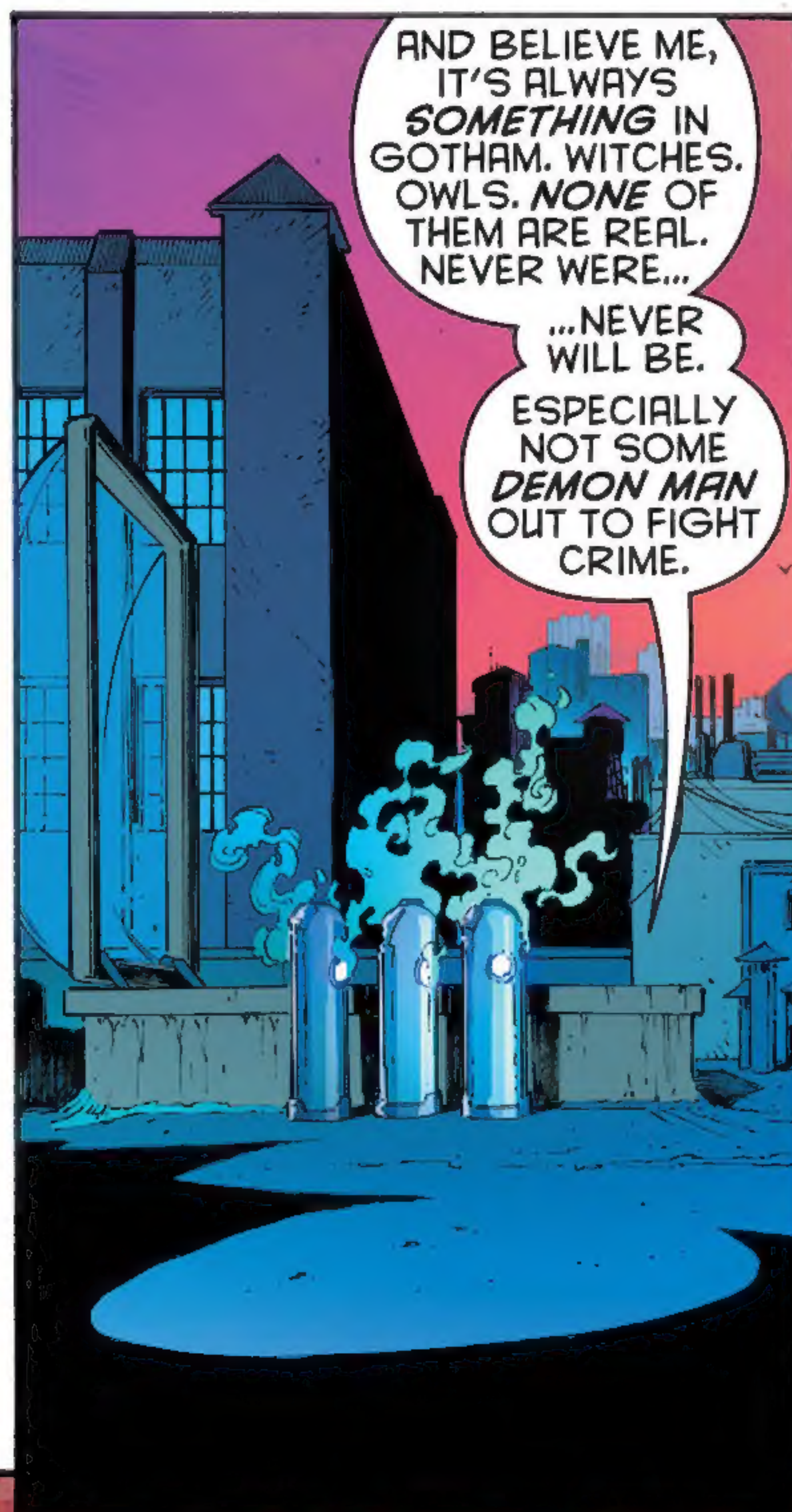


BUT--

HOOD
SIXTY-SEVEN.
LISTEN. MY
PEOPLE HAVE
LIVED HERE EIGHT
GENERATIONS.
EIGHT.



SINCE
THIS WHOLE
NEIGHBORHOOD
WAS DUTCH
FARMLAND. SINCE
DAMN WOOLLY
BLACK SHEEP
STOOD WHERE
OUR TRUCK IS
PARKED.



AND BELIEVE ME,
IT'S ALWAYS
SOMETHING IN
GOTHAM. WITCHES.
OWLS. *NONE* OF
THEM ARE REAL.
NEVER WERE...

...NEVER
WILL BE.
ESPECIALLY
NOT SOME
DEMON MAN
OUT TO FIGHT
CRIME.



SO LISTEN
TO ME WHEN I
TELL YOU THAT ALL
THAT'S REAL IS
THIS. THE RED
HOOD GANG. I
KNOW...

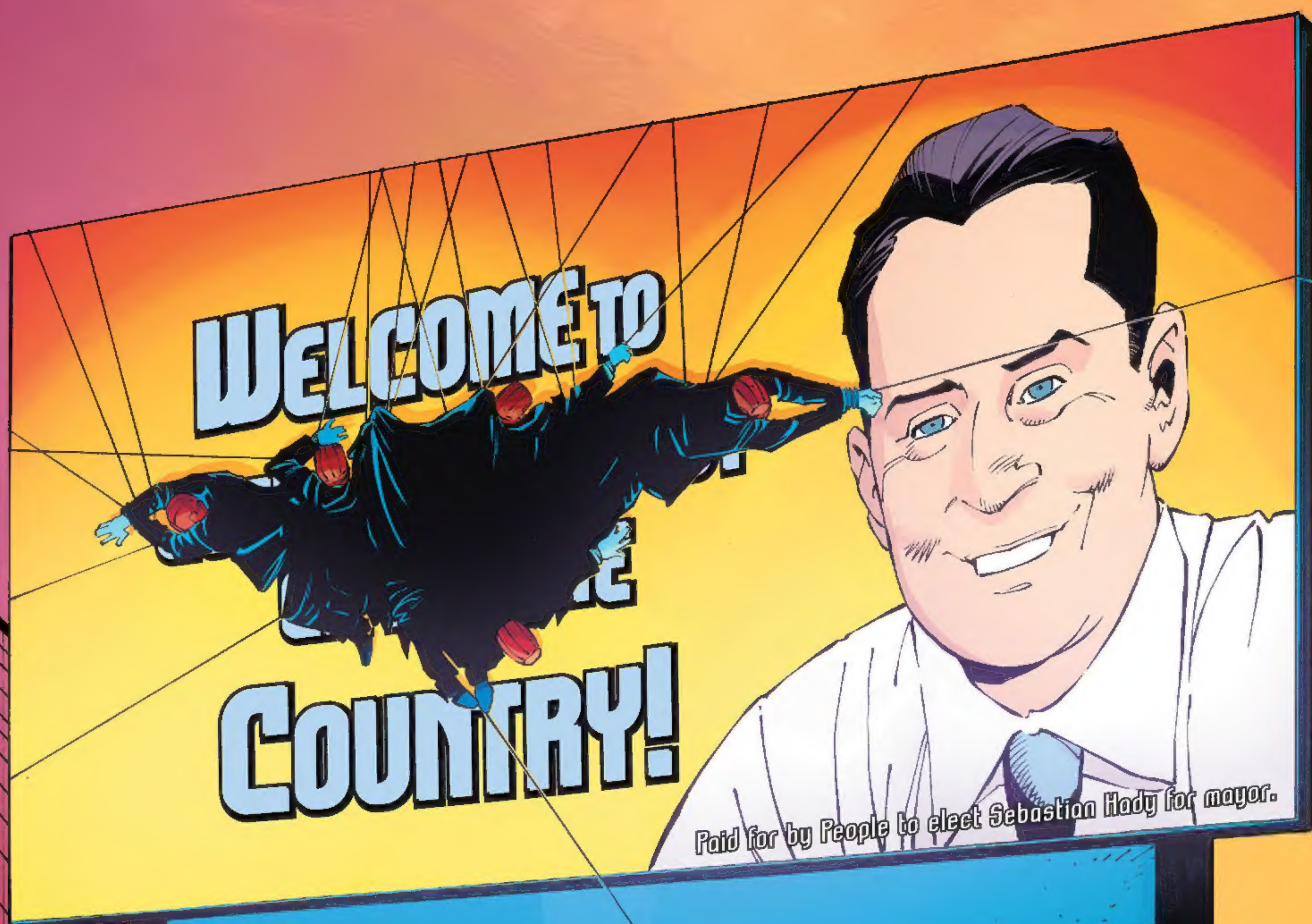


...BECAUSE I'M
NATIVE ROOTS,
AND I KNOW
THIS...PLACE...

...SIXTY-
SEVEN? WHERE'D
YOU...



...GO?



Paid for by People to elect Sebastian Hady for mayor.



PSST. HEY,
YOU...

NATIVE
ROOTS. COME
CLOSER...

...MY BAT...
IT STILL NEEDS
A HEAD.



ZERO YEAR

DARK CITY PART ONE

SCOTT SNYDER
WRITER

GREG CAPULLO
PENCILLER

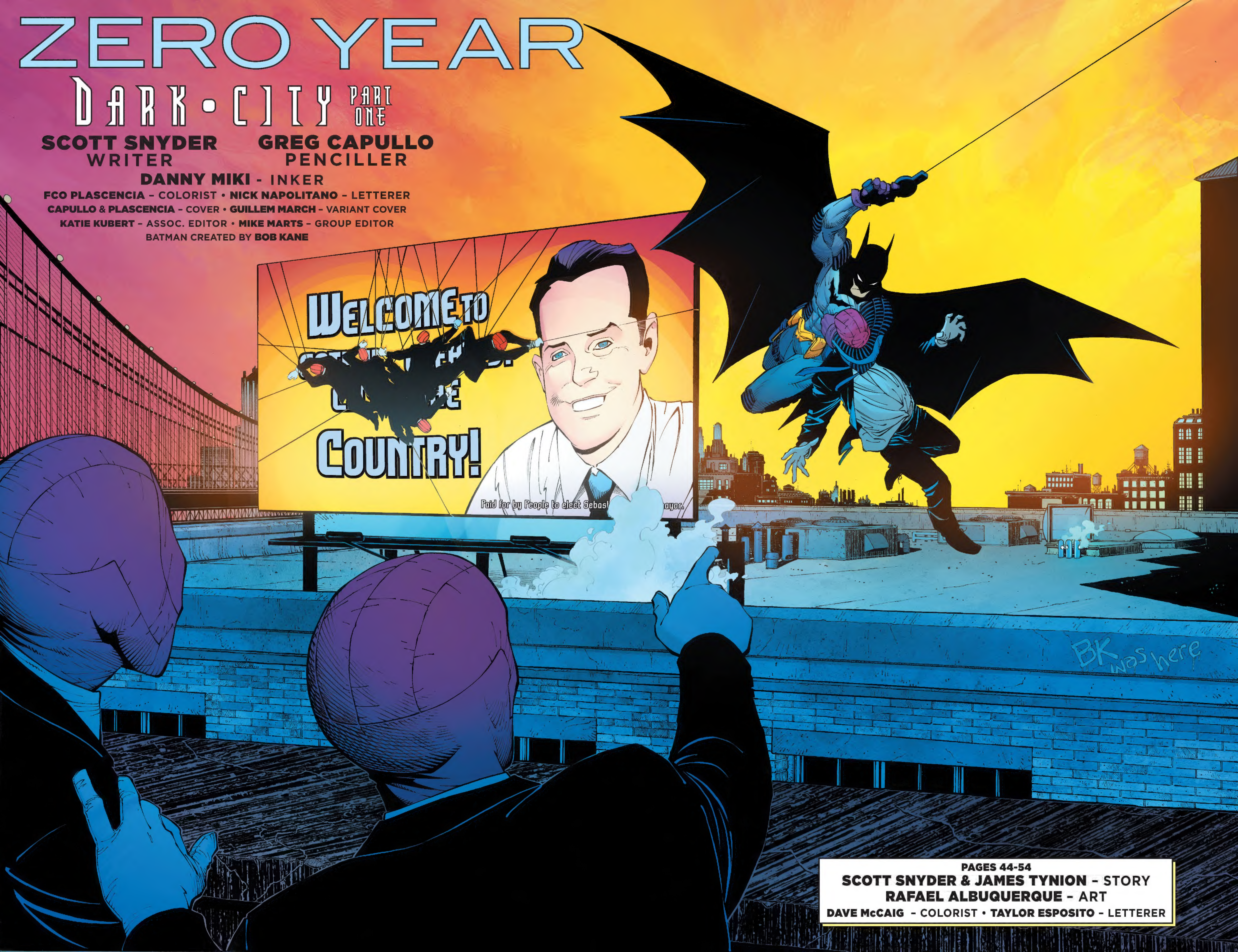
DANNY MIKI - INKER

FCO PLASCENCIA - COLORIST • **NICK NAPOLITANO** - LETTERER

CAPULLO & PLASCENCIA - COVER • **GUILLEM MARCH** - VARIANT COVER

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BATMAN CREATED BY **BOB KANE**

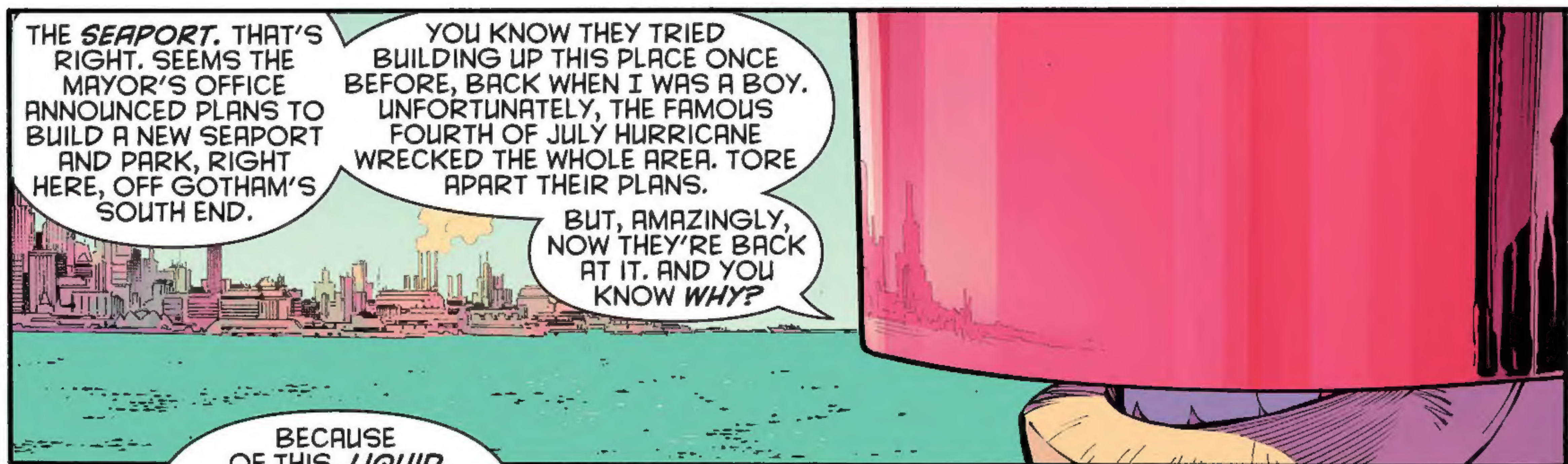


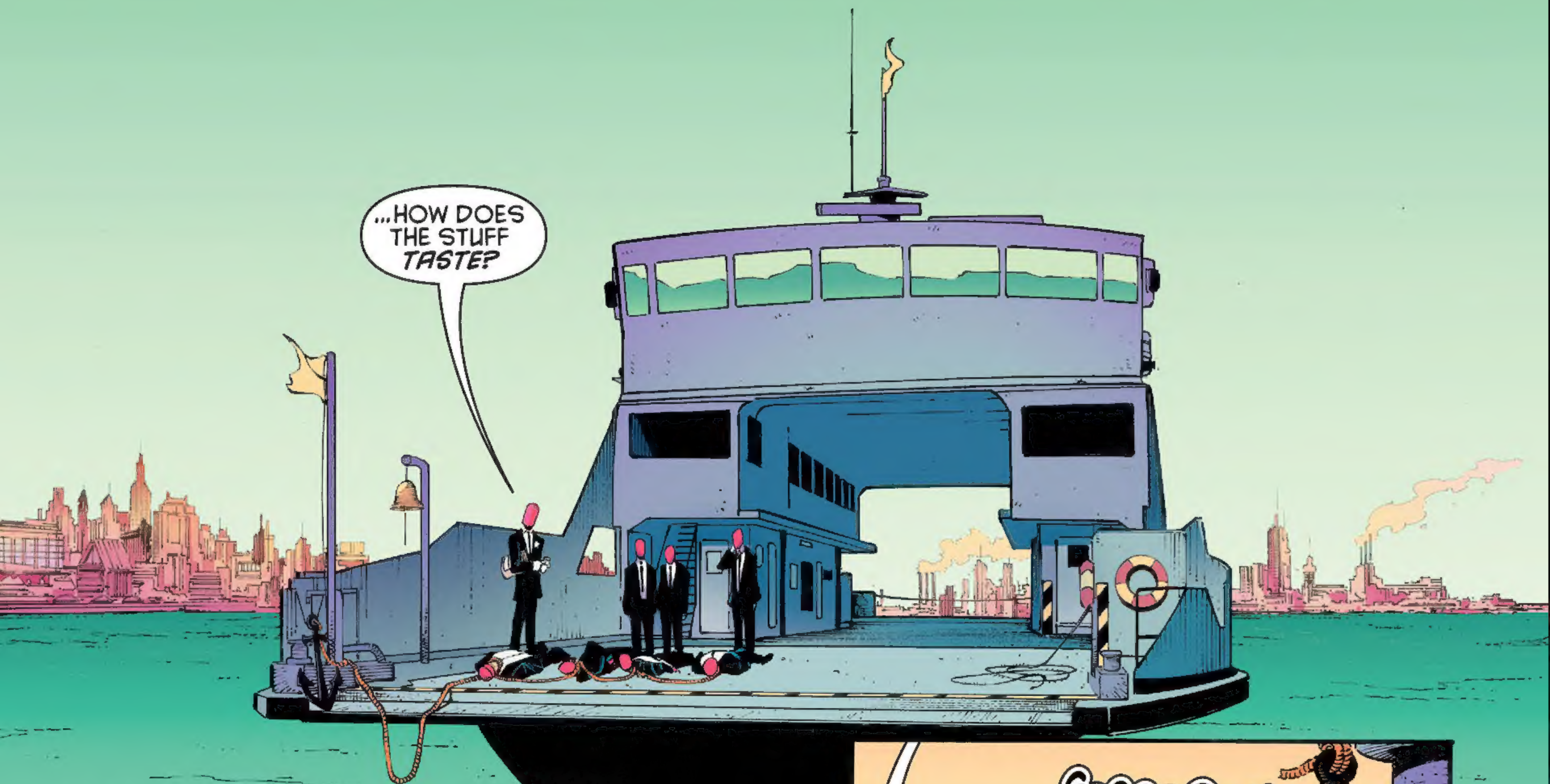
PAGES 44-54

SCOTT SNYDER & JAMES TYNION - STORY
RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE - ART

DAVE McCAIG - COLORIST • **TAYLOR ESPOSITO** - LETTERER

WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH THIS CITY, BATMAN?!

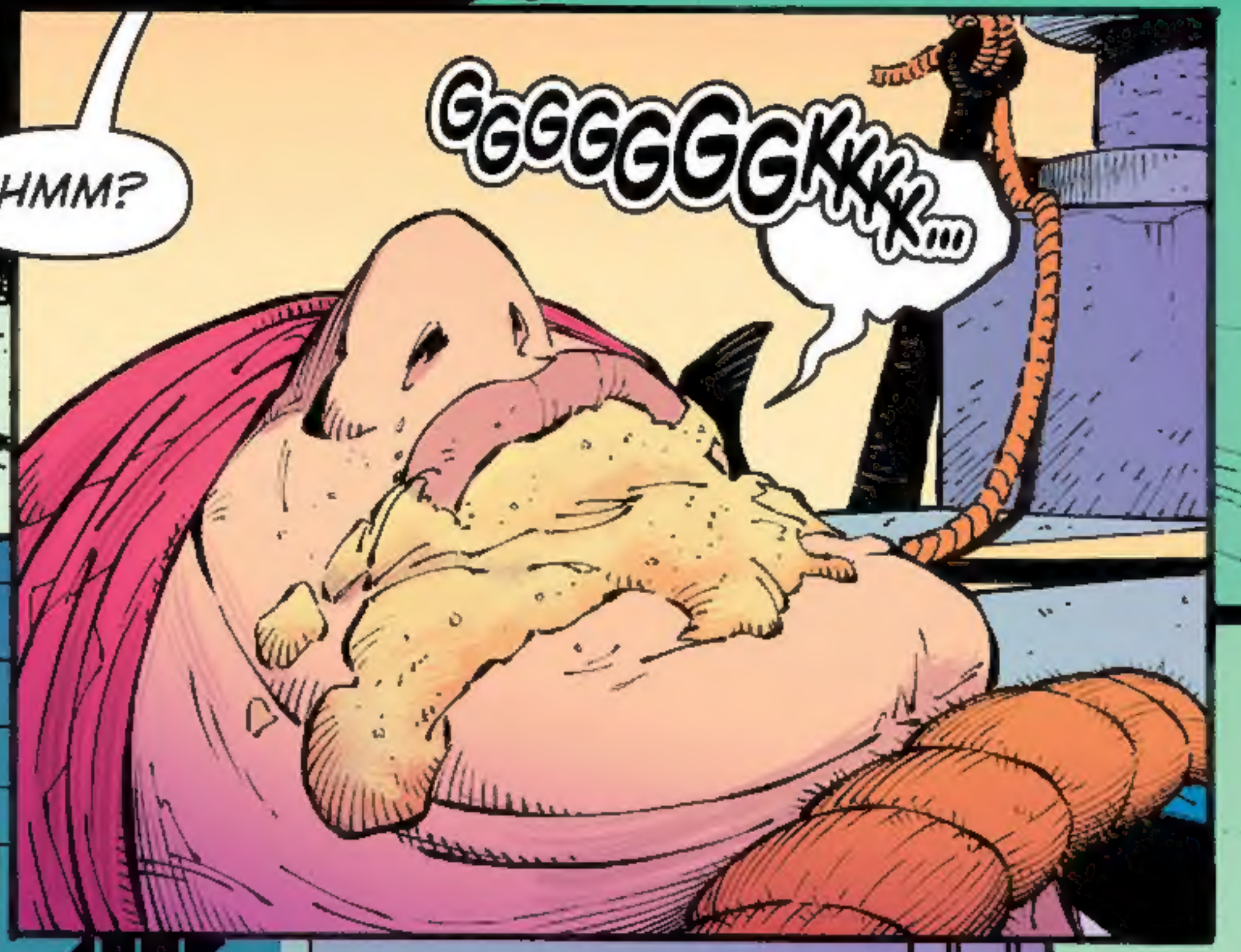




...HOW DOES
THE STUFF
TASTE?

HMM?

GGGGGGGGKKK...



SEEMS
THEY'RE STILL
CHEWING. ANY
OF YOU WANT
TO TRY?

NO?

GOOD. BECAUSE
YOU KNOW WHAT SILICA
IS, AT ITS BASE? IT'S
SAND. THIS CITY WILL
TEAR DOWN YOUR PLANS.
LIKE OUR GANG, IT'S OUT
TO SHOW YOU THAT
THERE IS **NO POINT**.

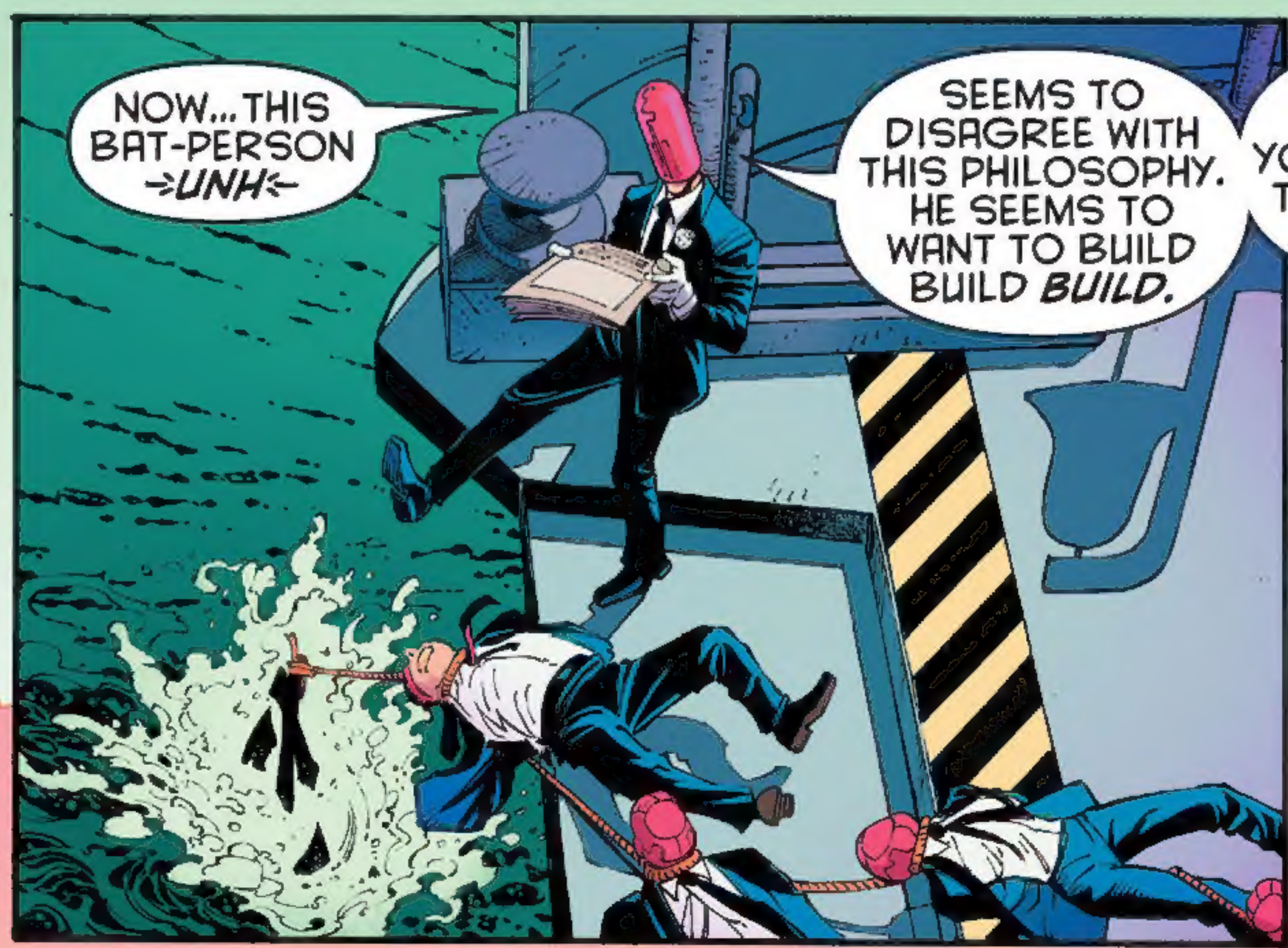
NOW... THIS
BAT-PERSON
=UNH=

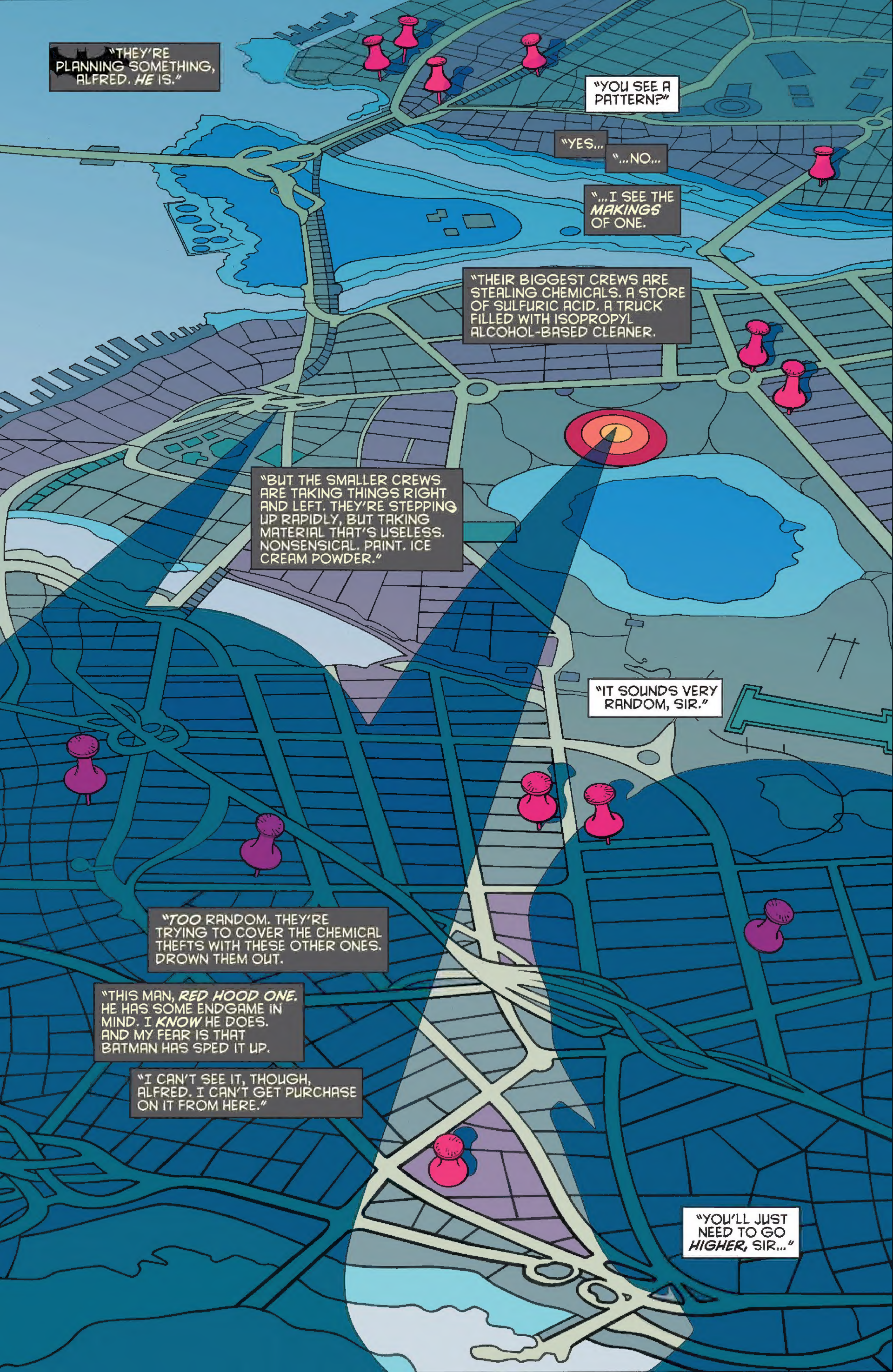
SEEMS TO
DISAGREE WITH
THIS PHILOSOPHY.
HE SEEMS TO
WANT TO BUILD
BUILD BUILD.

IF YOU FEEL
AS HE DOES,
YOU'RE WELCOME
TO **JOIN HIM** IN
HIS MISSION.

HELL,
YOU CAN BE
THERE AT
THE START
OF IT...

...YOU CAN
BE THE **FIRST
BRICKS** IN HIS
NEW CITY OF
SAND.





"THEY'RE PLANNING SOMETHING, ALFRED. *HE* IS."

"YOU SEE A PATTERN?"

"YES..."

"...NO..."

"...I SEE THE *MAKINGS* OF ONE."

"THEIR BIGGEST CREWS ARE STEALING CHEMICALS. A STORE OF SULFURIC ACID. A TRUCK FILLED WITH ISOPROPYL ALCOHOL-BASED CLEANER."

"BUT THE SMALLER CREWS ARE TAKING THINGS RIGHT AND LEFT. THEY'RE STEPPING UP RAPIDLY, BUT TAKING MATERIAL THAT'S USELESS. NONSENSICAL. PAINT. ICE CREAM POWDER."

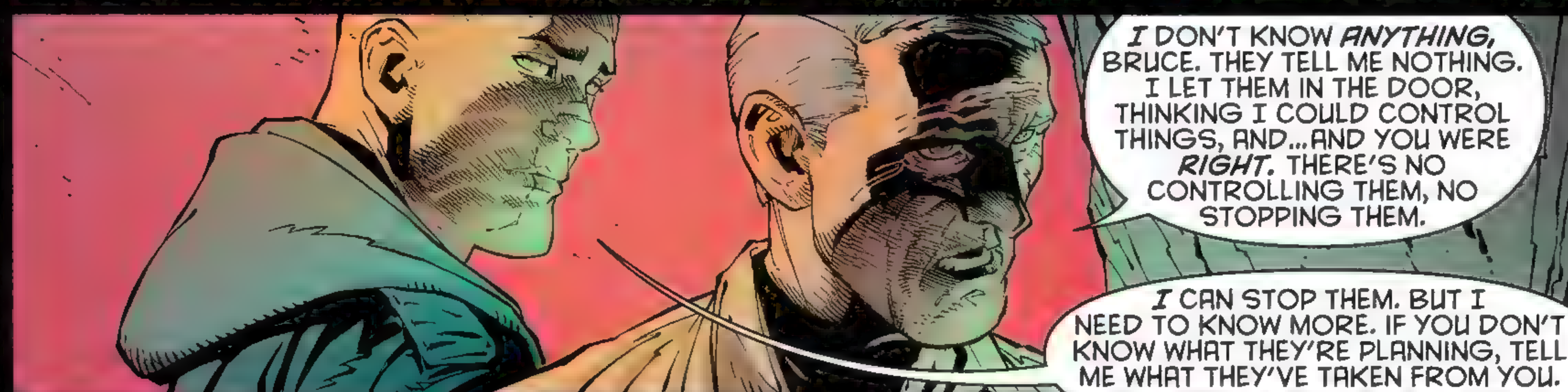
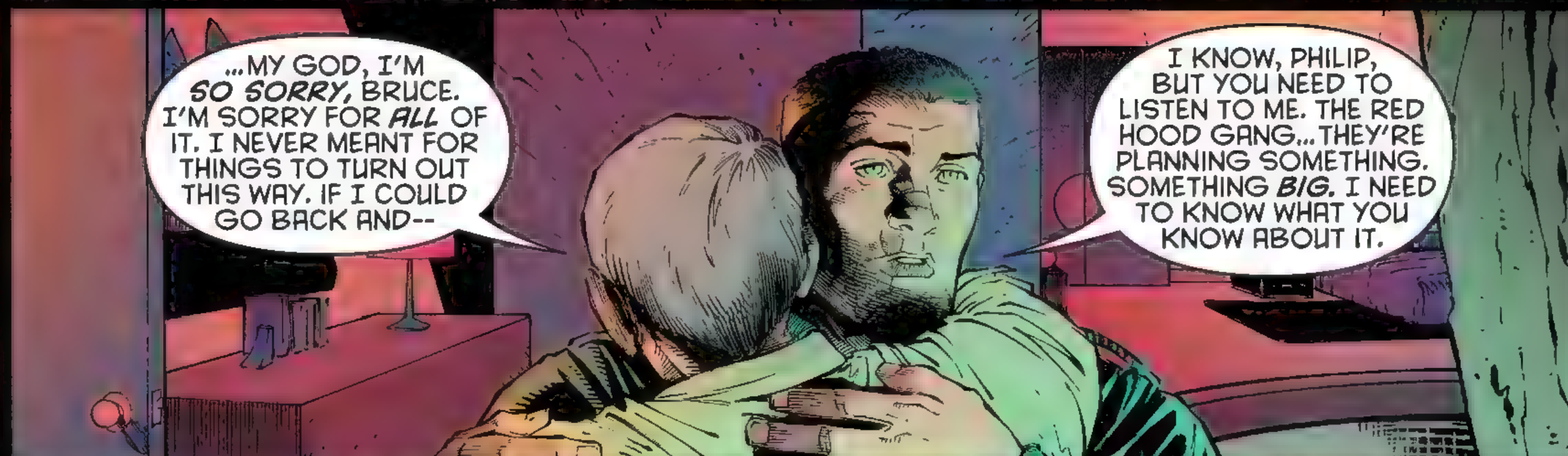
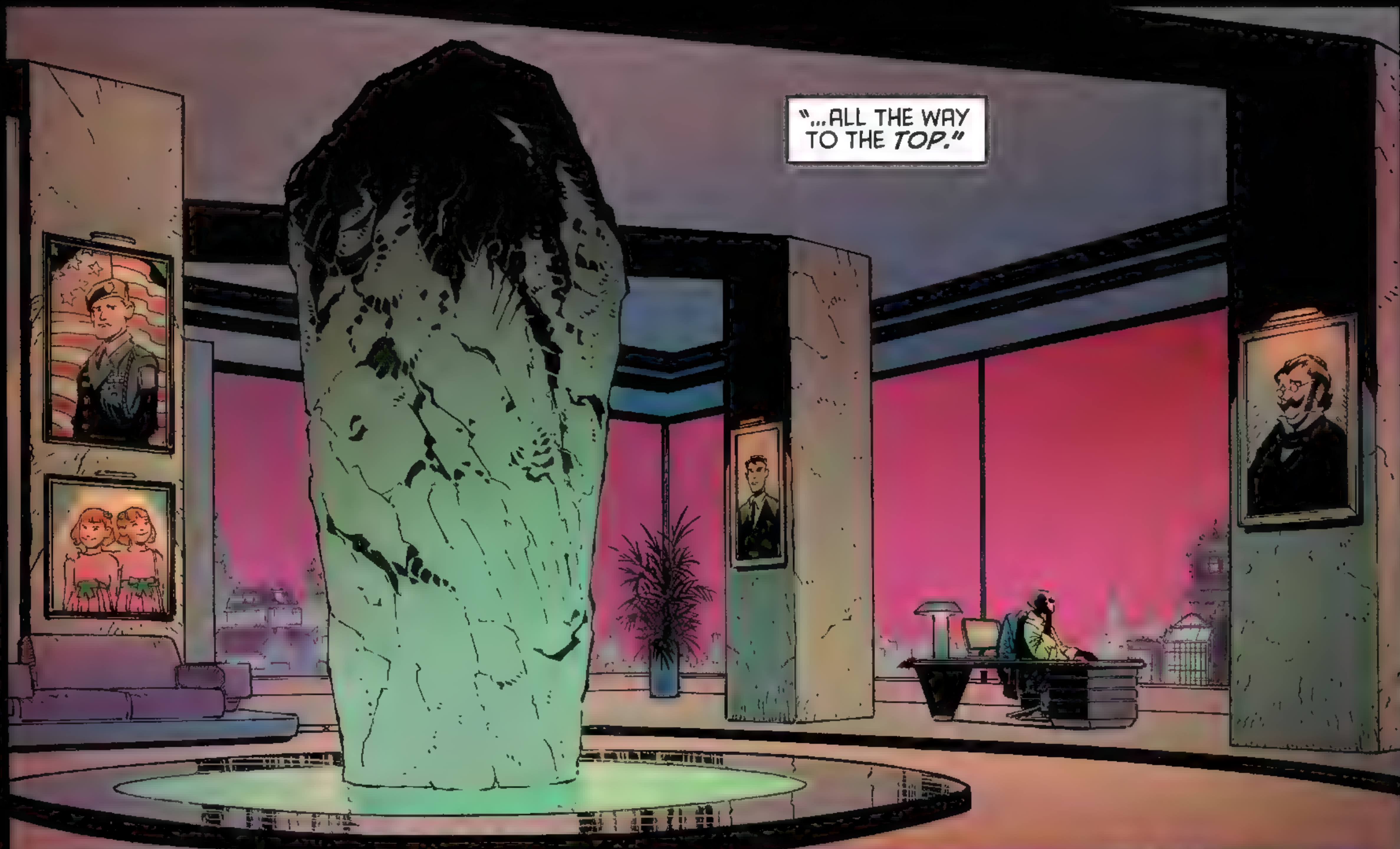
"IT SOUNDS VERY RANDOM, SIR."

"TOO RANDOM. THEY'RE TRYING TO COVER THE CHEMICAL THEFTS WITH THESE OTHER ONES. DROWN THEM OUT."

"THIS MAN, *RED HOOD ONE*. HE HAS SOME ENDGAME IN MIND. I *KNOW* HE DOES. AND MY FEAR IS THAT BATMAN HAS SPED IT UP."

"I CAN'T SEE IT, THOUGH, ALFRED. I CAN'T GET PURCHASE ON IT FROM HERE."

"YOU'LL JUST NEED TO GO *HIGHER*, SIR..."



WE USED TO. WE TAG EVERYTHING WE MAKE WITH A TINY MAGNETIC SIGNATURE. IF SOMETHING LEAVES A DESIGNATED FACILITY, IT PINGS THE SYSTEM.

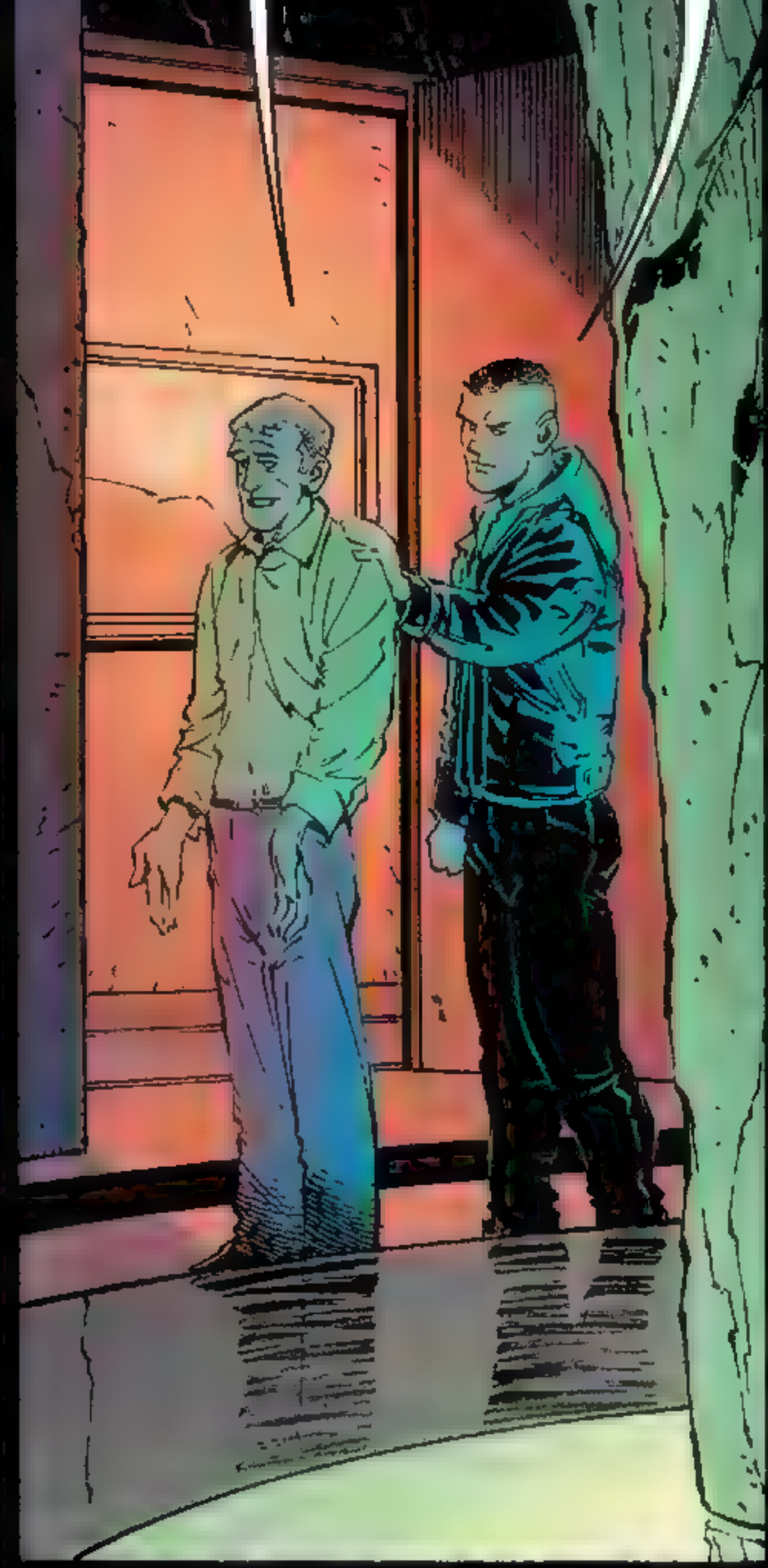
ONLY I AND A COUPLE OTHER MEN KNEW ABOUT IT. TWO DAYS AGO, RED HOOD ONE *DISMANTLED* IT.

I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING ANYTHING ANYMORE. I TRIED WARNING THE POLICE, BUT MEMBERS OF THE GANG CAME AND DID *THIS*...

I KNOW SOME... BUT NOT ALL. I NEED TO SEE THE *PATTERN*.

THEY JUST *TAKE*, BRUCE. WHATEVER THEY WANT. THEY CONTROL THE RECORDS NOW, SO THEY OBSCURE IT ALL.

BUT YOU MUST HAVE SECRET WAYS OF TRACKING. FOR SAFETY.



...I'M... I'M SORRY, PHILIP.

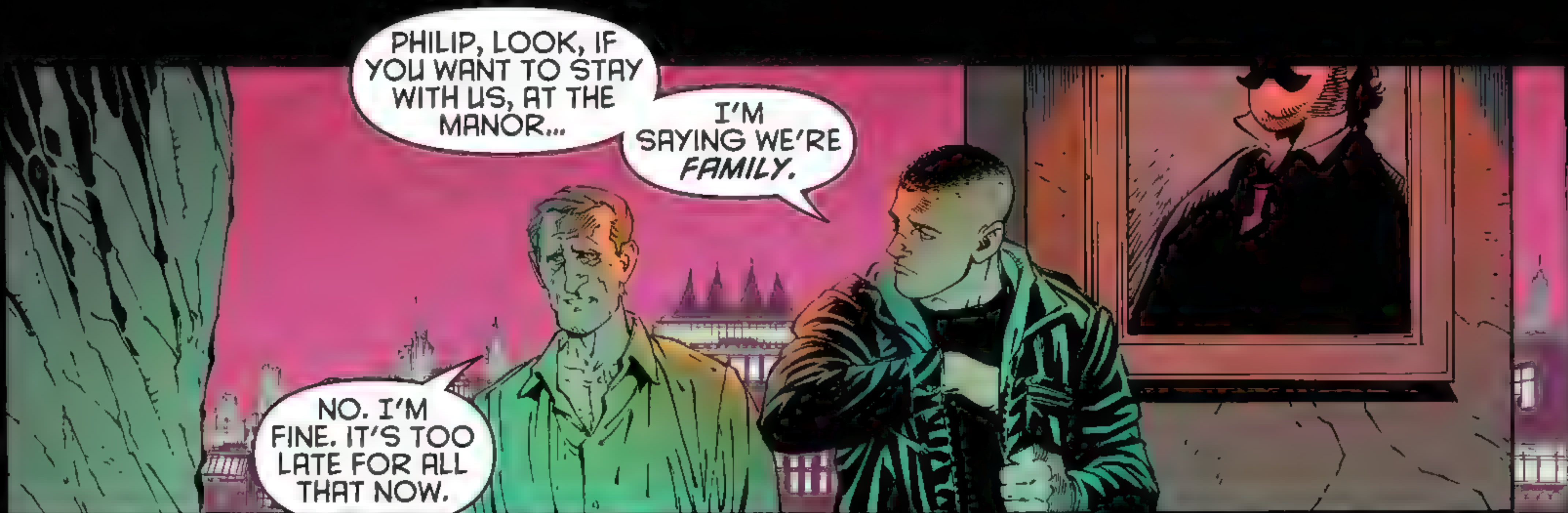
CAN YOU AT LEAST GIVE ME ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM?



HERE. PLEASE. KEYS TO THE KINGDOM.



I'M AFRAID I'VE LEFT IT IN DISREPAIR, TO SAY THE LEAST. *HEH.*



PHILIP, LOOK, IF YOU WANT TO STAY WITH US, AT THE MANOR...

I'M SAYING WE'RE *FAMILY*.

NO. I'M FINE. IT'S TOO LATE FOR ALL THAT NOW.

FUNNY. YOU KNOW, I HAD THIS MOVED HERE WHEN I FIRST TOOK OVER. IT'S CUT FROM THE BEDROCK OF GOTHAM. I THOUGHT IT'D BE A NICE SYMBOL.

HAD A HELL OF A TIME CHOPPING IT OUT, THOUGH. IT'S *MICA SCHIST*. ONE OF THE BEST ROCKS TO BUILD ON, BUT ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TO SHAPE.

IT'S AS TOUGH AS IT COMES. NO FLEXIBILITY. SINGULARLY ITSELF, THROUGH AND THROUGH. AND IT'S *UNFORGIVING*.

YES. IT *IS*.



WHY DID YOU *DO* IT, BRUCE? WHY'D YOU COME BACK AGAIN? YOU COULD HAVE STAYED DEAD THIS TIME FOR *REAL*. YOU'D HAVE WHAT YOU WANTED.

...
NO, I THOUGHT I WOULD, BUT I WOULDN'T.



AH... *PENNYWORTH*.

SO THAT'S IT, EH? THE OLD BASTARD HAS YOU COMING OUT OF YOUR CAVE?



NO...



"...I WOULDN'T GO QUITE *THAT FAR*."

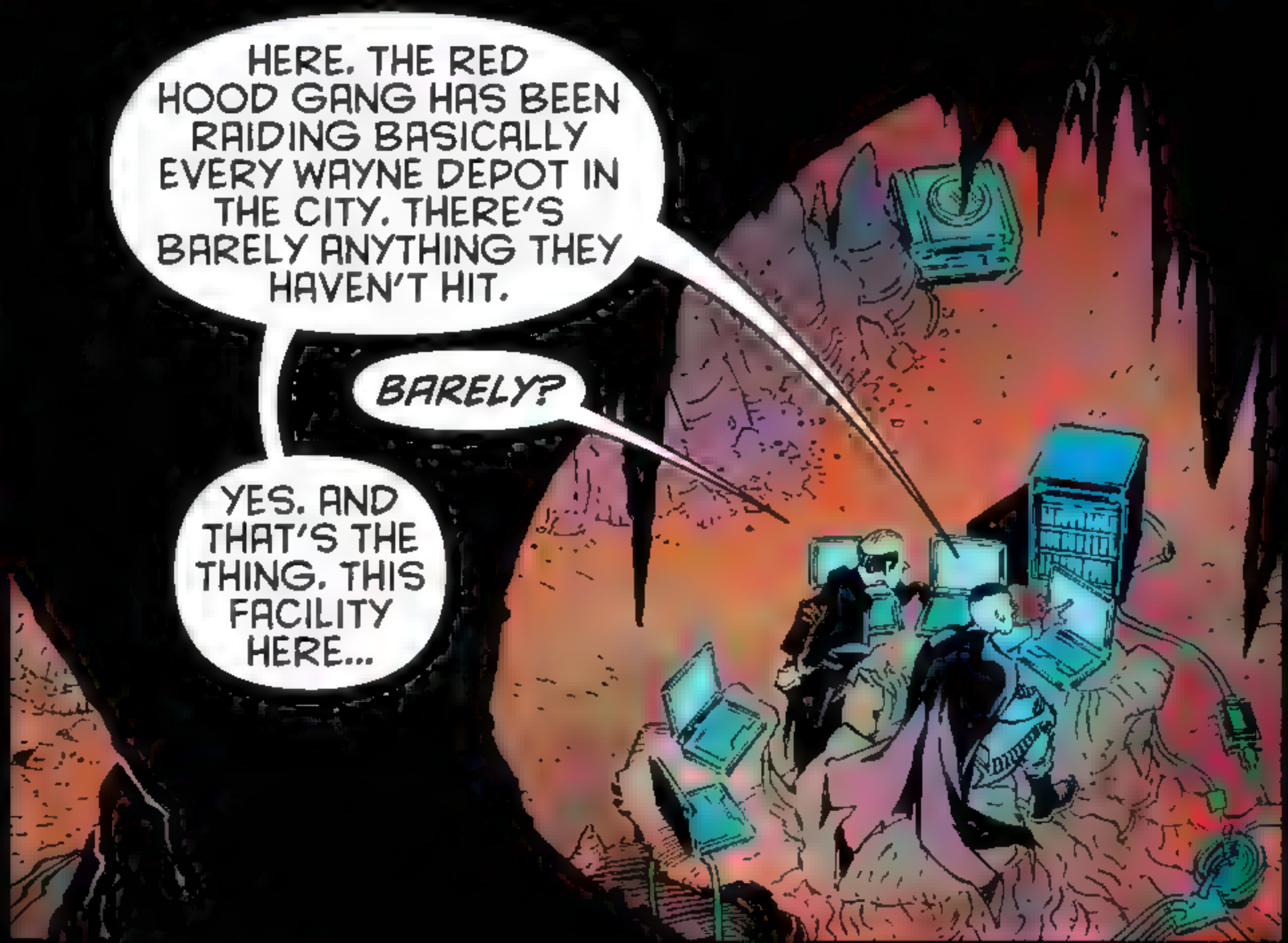
WATCH YOUR STEP, ALFRED, THE RUNGS ARE SLIPPERY.

SO LONG AS YOU DON'T INSTALL A *FIRE POLE*, I'LL MANAGE, SIR.



THE CAVE ROOF, OVER THERE--IT'S NEARLY AT SURFACE. WITH A LITTLE WORK, WE'LL CREATE AN ENTRANCE FROM INSIDE THE STUDY.

A CAVE HOLE IN THE STUDY. LOVELY. WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND?



HERE. THE RED HOOD GANG HAS BEEN RAIDING BASICALLY EVERY WAYNE DEPOT IN THE CITY. THERE'S BARELY ANYTHING THEY HAVEN'T HIT.

BARELY?

YES. AND THAT'S THE THING. THIS FACILITY HERE...



...IT'S FULL OF MATERIAL YOU'D THINK THE GANG WOULD *WANT*, BUT THEY HAVEN'T TOUCHED IT. IT'S BASICALLY THE ONLY WAYNE SITE LEFT ALONE.

WHY WOULD THEY...

...OH, NO.

BUT WITH
ACCESS
TO--

I KNOW, ALFRED.
PLUS, GIVEN WHAT
THEY'VE STOLEN SO
FAR...I JUST REALIZED
IT MOMENTS AGO,
TOO.

I KNOW WHAT
THEY'RE PLANNING.
AND WHEN THEY'RE
GOING TO DO IT. I
JUST DON'T KNOW
HOW TO *STOP* IT.

YOU MUST, SIR. THE
FACILITY IS HEAVILY
GUARDED, BUT PERHAPS
IF YOU...I DON'T KNOW,
IF *BATMAN*--

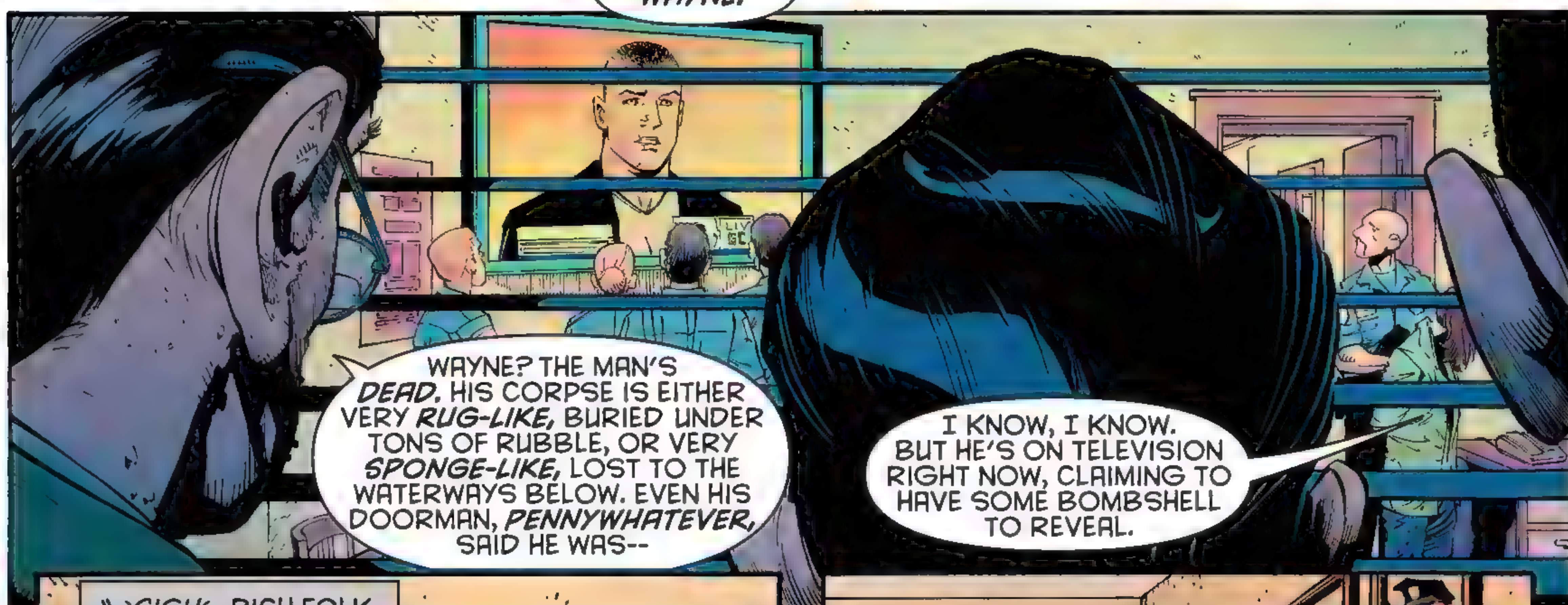
I DON'T THINK
BATMAN CAN
HANDLE THIS ONE,
ALFRED.

I DON'T
THINK HE
SHOULD,
EITHER.

BUT,
SIR--

I THINK THIS IS A
JOB FOR *SOMEONE*
ELSE.

"SIR, YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO BELIEVE
THIS ONE..."





"...THE TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD BILLIONAIRE WAS DECLARED LEGALLY DEAD YEARS AGO, AFTER LEAVING GOTHAM, BUT NOW IT SEEMS..."

"...HE'S ALIVE AND WELL, DESPITE RECENT REPORTS THAT HE'D BEEN KILLED IN AN EXPLOSION IN CRIME ALLEY, WHERE HE'D BEEN SAID TO HAVE TAKEN UP RESIDENCE..."

"...NOW, MR. WAYNE IS BACK, IT SEEMS. THE BIG QUESTION ON EVERYONE'S MIND IS: WHAT DOES HE HAVE TO SAY?"



MR. WAYNE!

WHY DID YOU STAY AWAY FROM GOTHAM FOR SO LONG? DID YOU LEAVE A FAMILY BEHIND IN--

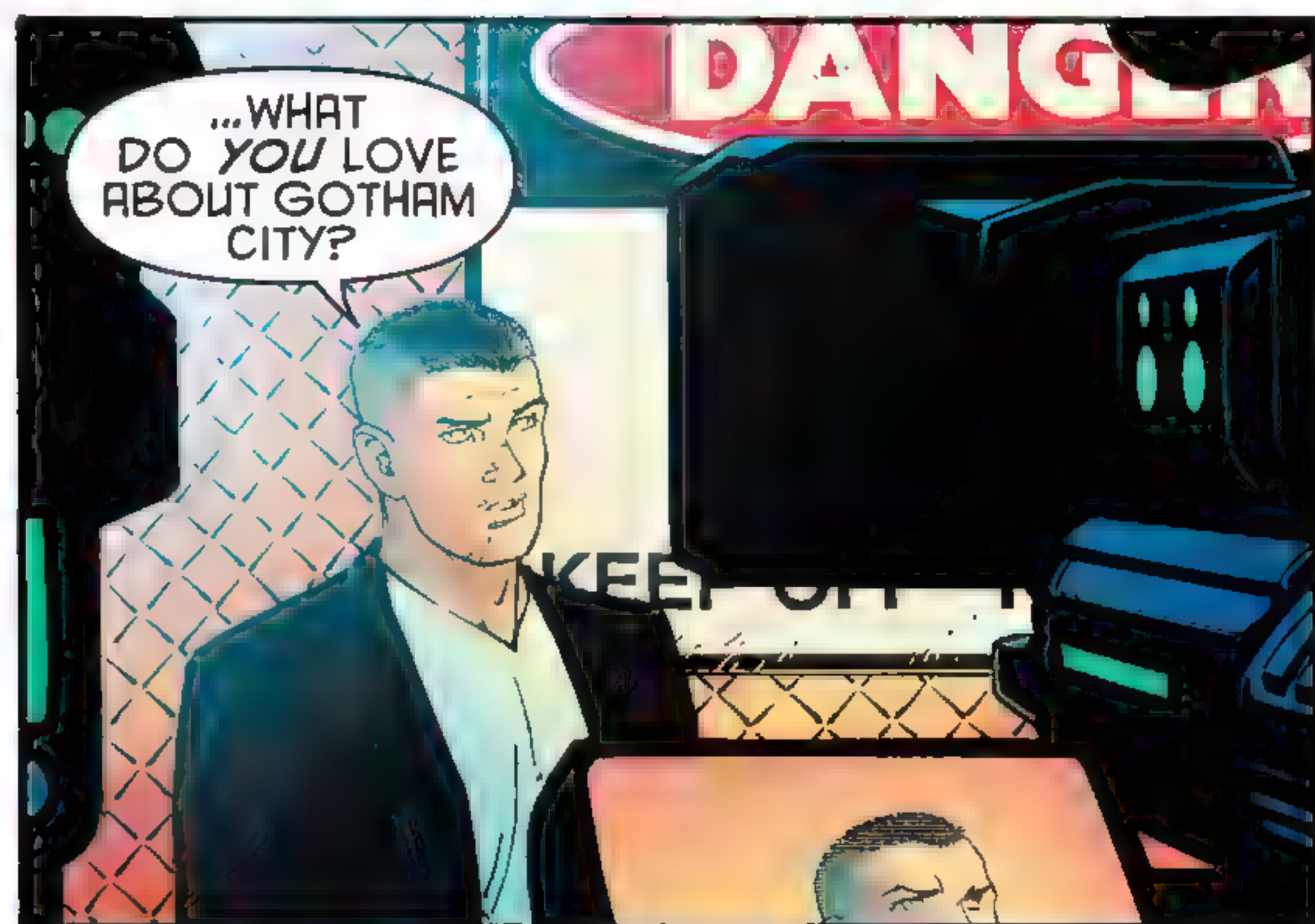
IS IT TRUE YOUR PARENTS LEFT YOU IN EXCESS OF--

ELECTRIC FENCE
KEEP OFF - KEEP

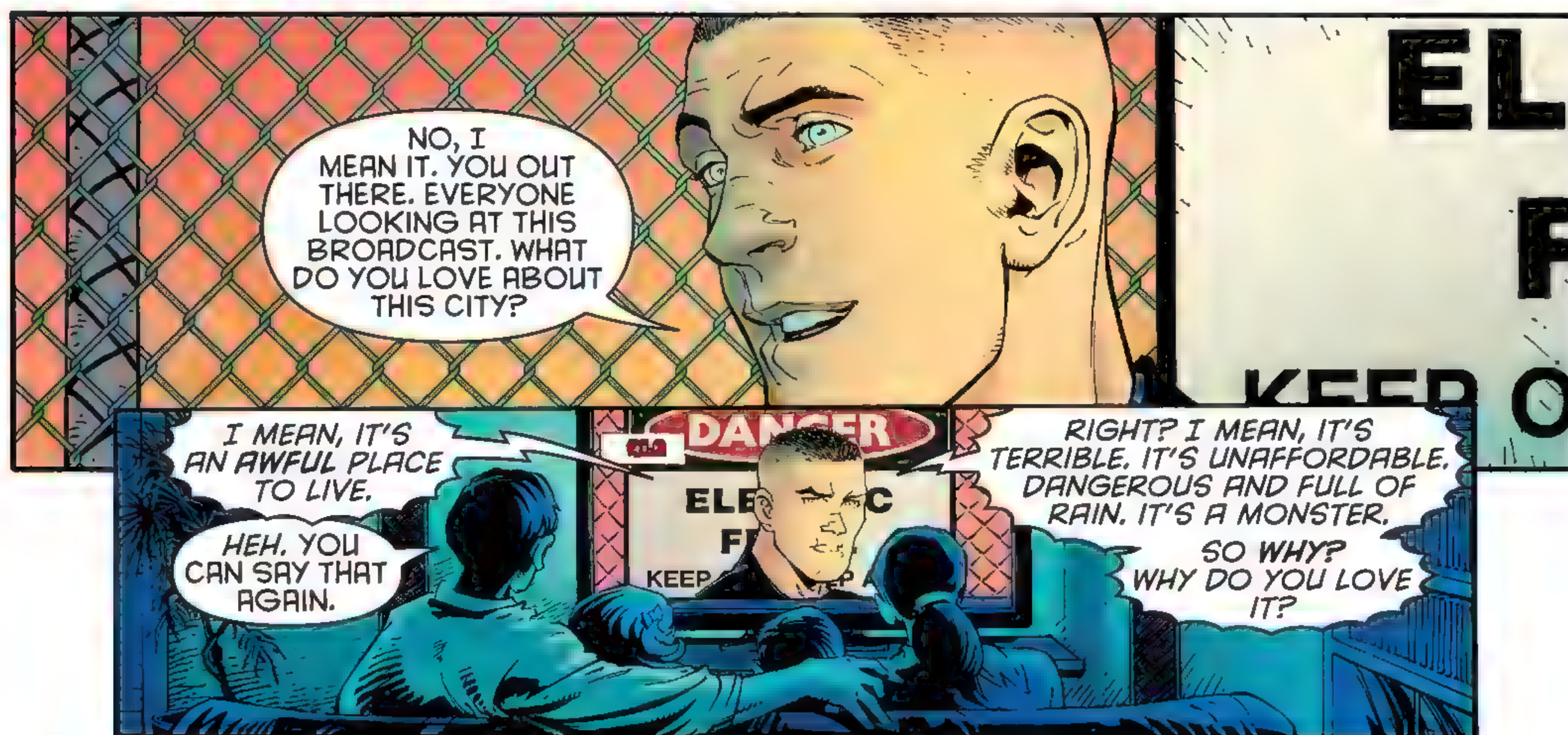
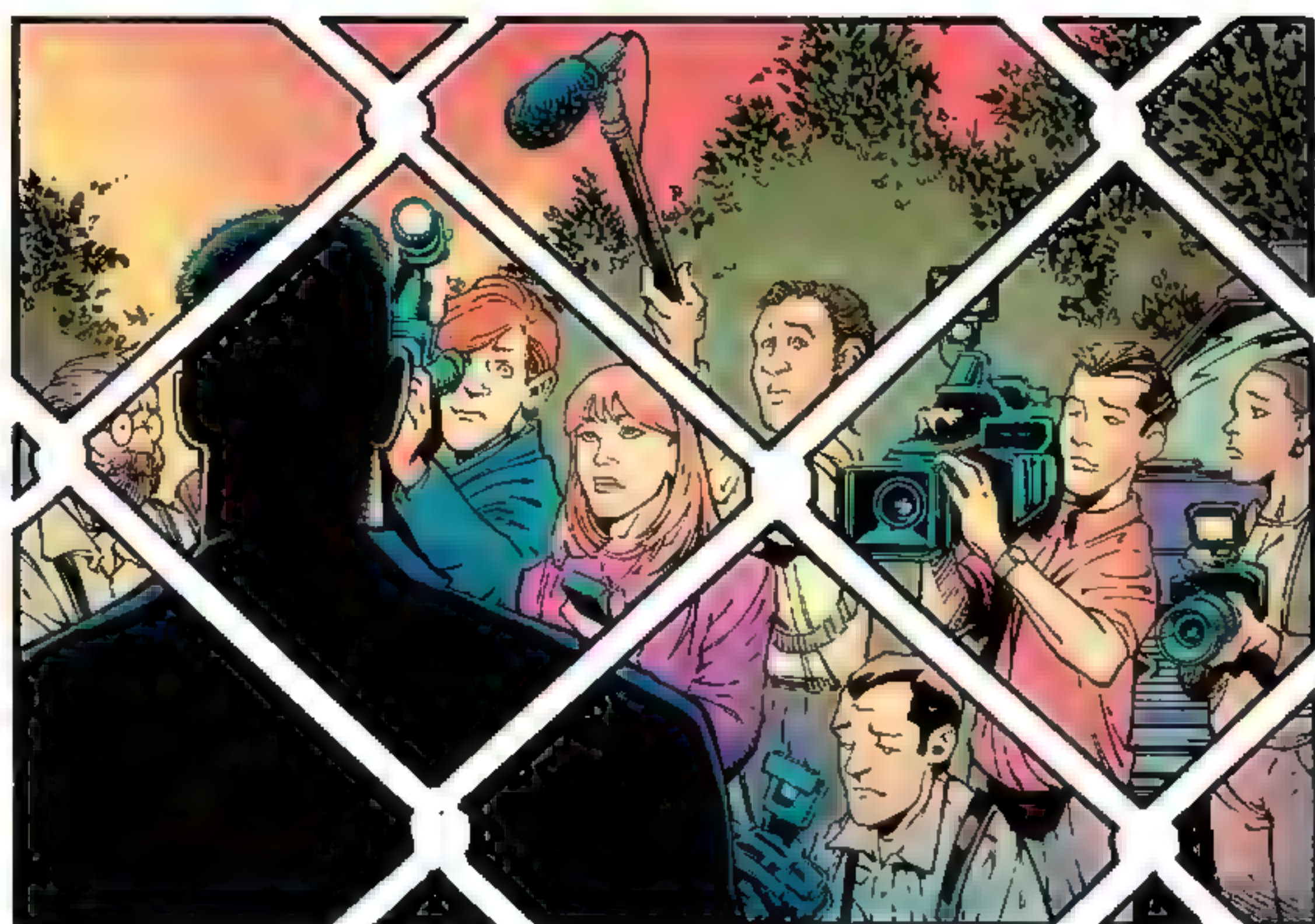
HELLO.

A LOT OF YOU DON'T KNOW ME.

BUT MY NAME...MY NAME IS BRUCE WAYNE, AND I'M HERE TODAY TO ASK YOU SOMETHING. JUST ONE THING. AND IT'S THIS...



...WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT GOTHAM CITY?



NO, I MEAN IT. YOU OUT THERE. EVERYONE LOOKING AT THIS BROADCAST. WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THIS CITY?

I MEAN, IT'S AN AWFUL PLACE TO LIVE.

HEH. YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.

DANGER

ELECTRIC FENCE

KEEP OFF - KEEP

RIGHT? I MEAN, IT'S TERRIBLE. IT'S UNAFFORDABLE, DANGEROUS AND FULL OF RAIN. IT'S A MONSTER.

SO WHY? WHY DO YOU LOVE IT?



THE TRUTH IS, ONLY YOU KNOW WHY YOU *STAY* HERE. WHY YOU *PUT UP* WITH THIS PLACE.

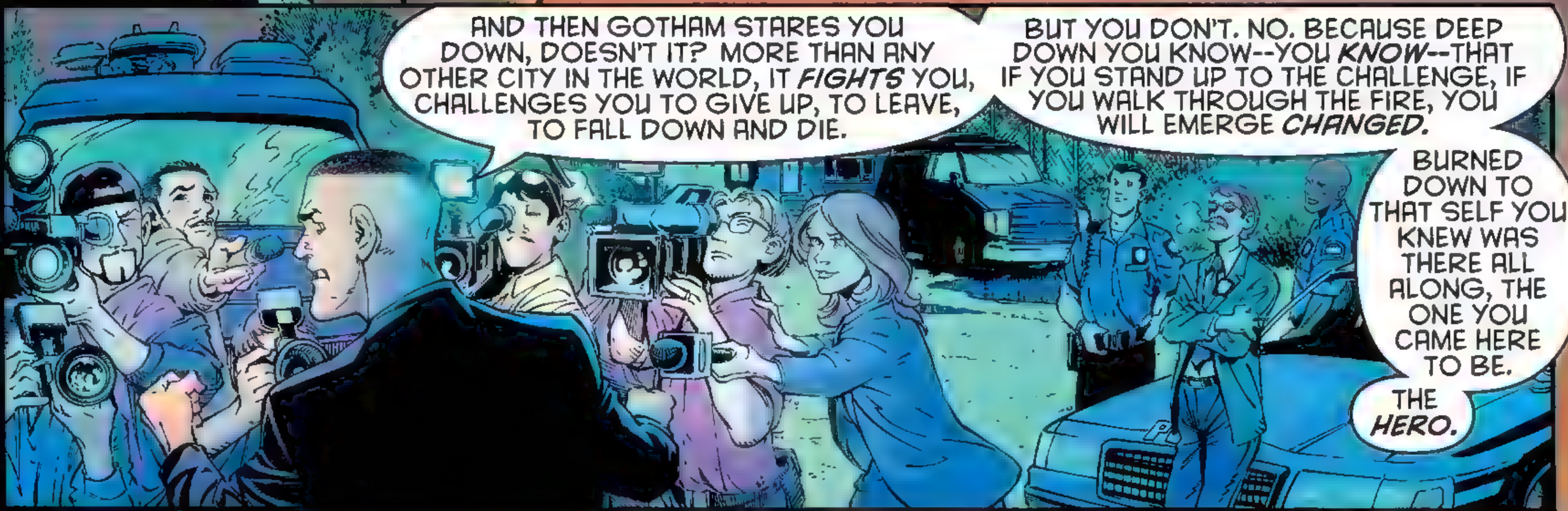
OR MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW. I DIDN'T KNOW WHY I CAME BACK UNTIL JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO.

BUT STANDING HERE TODAY, RIGHT NOW, I *CAN* TELL YOU WHY I LOVE IT. I LOVE IT BECAUSE IT'S A CITY PEOPLE COME TO BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BECOME SOMETHING *MORE* THAN WHAT THEY *ARE*.

I USED TO COME HERE AFTER SCHOOL AND IMAGINE THIS GREAT PERSON I MIGHT ONE DAY BECOME.

AND WHAT I'M SAYING IS, MAYBE THAT'S THE THING. MAYBE *THAT'S* WHY.

WE COME HERE, TO GOTHAM, BECAUSE IT'S *TRANSFORMATIVE*, THIS PLACE. WE COME HERE WITH OUR DREAMS AND THE CITY, IT LOOKS AT US WITH ITS UNBLINKING STONE EYE--AN EYE THAT SEES ALL OUR FAULTS, EVERYTHING WE'RE AFRAID IS TRUE ABOUT OURSELVES--AND IT SAYS: "*TRY. I DARE YOU.*"



AND THEN GOTHAM STARES YOU DOWN, DOESN'T IT? MORE THAN ANY OTHER CITY IN THE WORLD, IT *FIGHTS* YOU, CHALLENGES YOU TO GIVE UP, TO LEAVE, TO FALL DOWN AND DIE.

BUT YOU DON'T. NO. BECAUSE DEEP DOWN YOU KNOW--YOU *KNOW*--THAT IF YOU STAND UP TO THE CHALLENGE, IF YOU WALK THROUGH THE FIRE, YOU WILL EMERGE *CHANGED*.

BURNED DOWN TO THAT SELF YOU KNEW WAS THERE ALL ALONG, THE ONE YOU CAME HERE TO BE.

THE *HERO*.

THAT'S WHY I CAME BACK. *DESPITE* WHAT HAPPENED TO MY PARENTS. BECAUSE IT'S A CITY WHERE WE'RE IN IT TOGETHER. WHERE WE'RE COMRADES IN ARMS.

ELECTRIC FENCE

BUT RECENTLY, THINGS HAVE CHANGED. I LOOK AROUND AND INSTEAD OF DEFIANCE, I SEE *FEAR* IN PEOPLE'S EYES. THE CITY HAS GONE FROM BEING A PLACE OF CHALLENGE TO ONE OF *TERROR*.

ALL BECAUSE OF THE *RED HOOD GANG*. A GROUP THAT TELLS YOU TO GIVE UP BECAUSE YOUR LIVES MEANS *NOTHING* AND DON'T MATTER.



NOT LONG AGO, THEY TRIED TO *KILL* ME. AND THEY ALMOST DID.

BUT I'M HERE TODAY TO TELL YOU THAT I'M *NOT AFRAID* OF THEM. AND YOU SHOULDN'T BE, EITHER. THIS IS OUR CHALLENGE. TO *STOP* THEM.

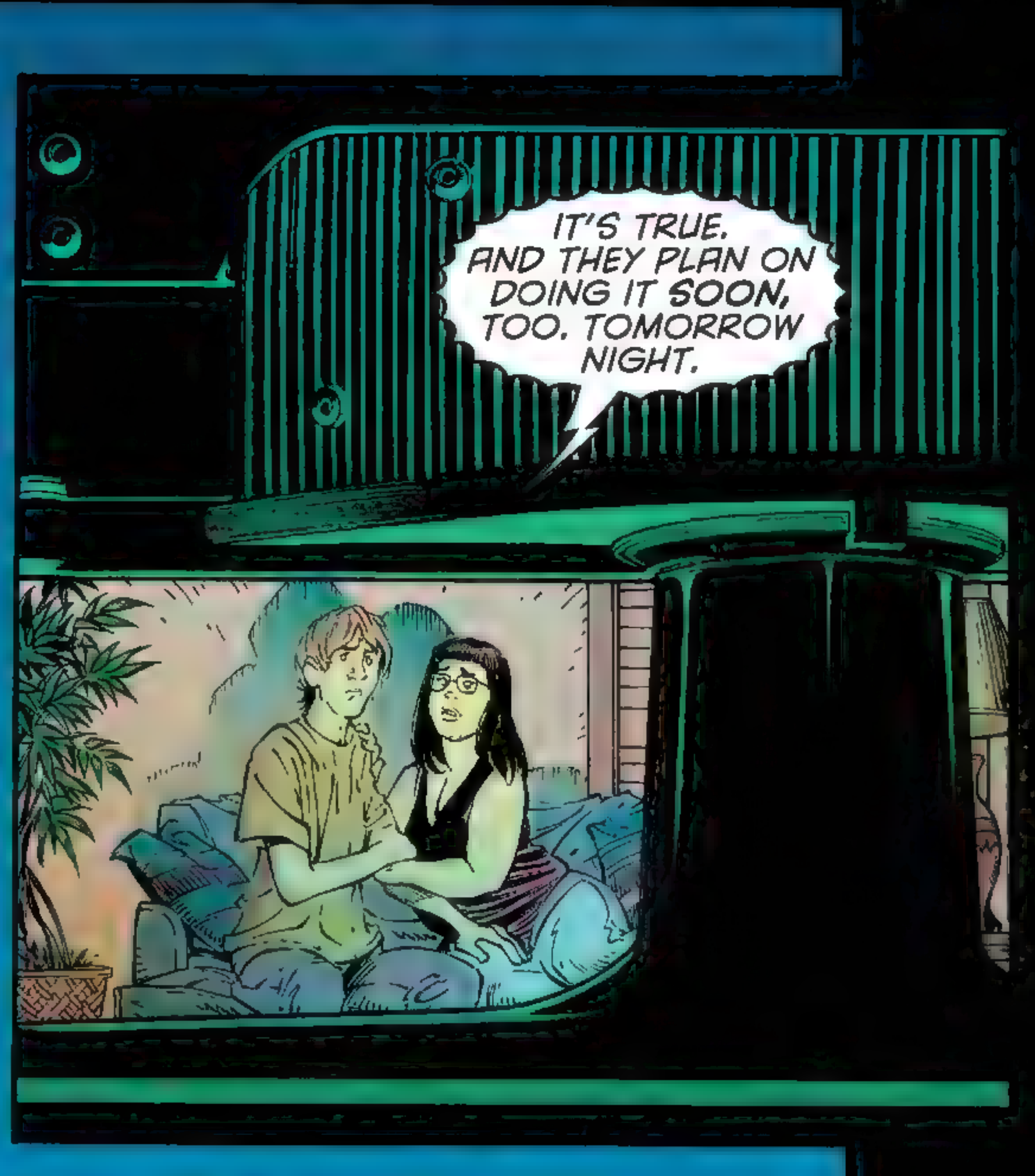
TO STOP THEIR PLAN. BECAUSE THEY *DO* HAVE A PLAN. A TERRIBLE PLAN. AND IT ALL BEGINS HERE. AT THIS *BUILDING* BEHIND ME...





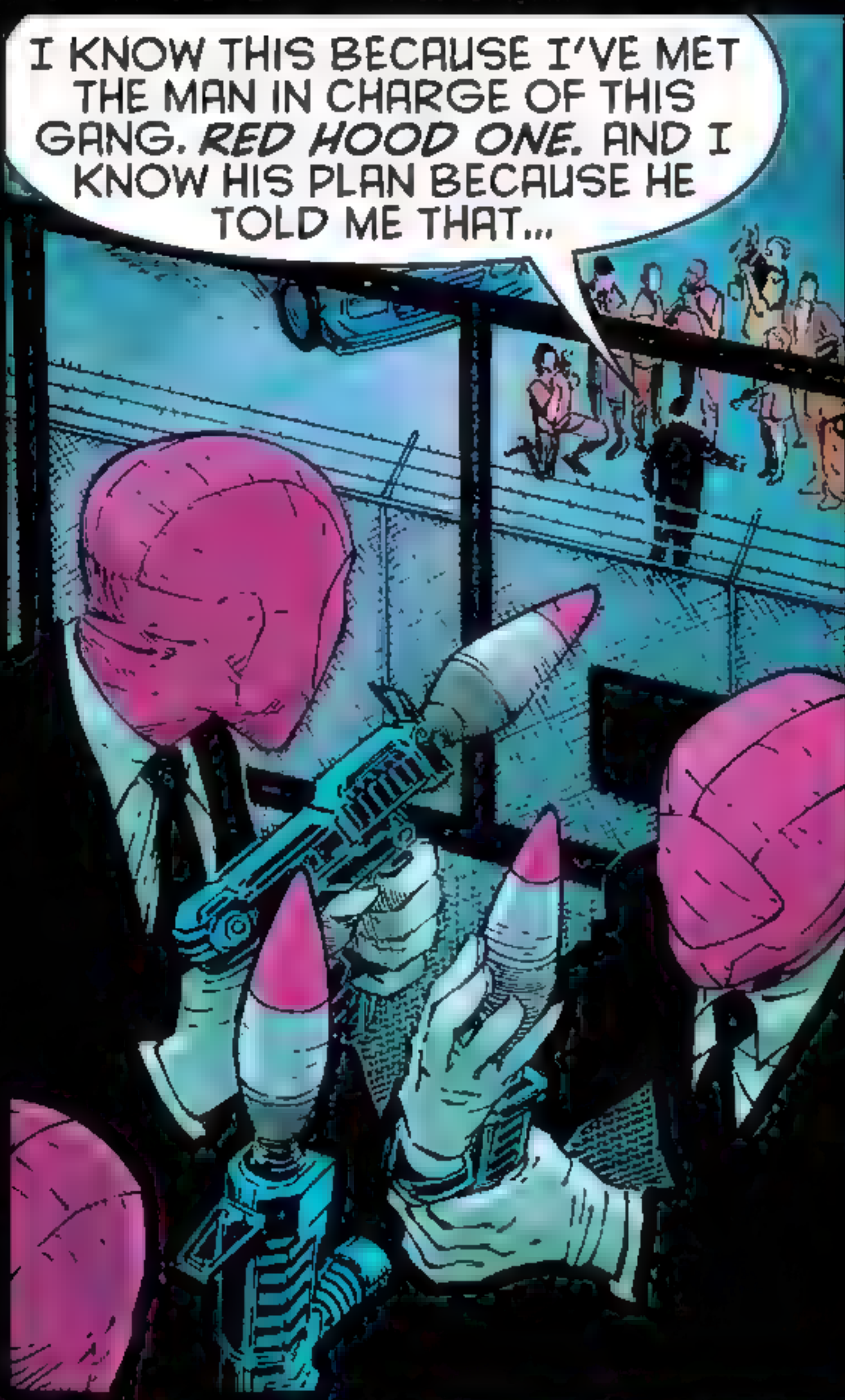
...A.C.E.
CHEMICAL.

INSIDE THIS FACILITY,
THE RED HOOD GANG IS
CONCOCTING WHAT I BELIEVE
TO BE A TOXIC *CHEMICAL
COCKTAIL*--A RADIOACTIVE,
FLESH-EATING *POISON* THAT
THEY PLAN ON EXPLODING AT
DIFFERENT LOCATIONS
AROUND THE CITY.

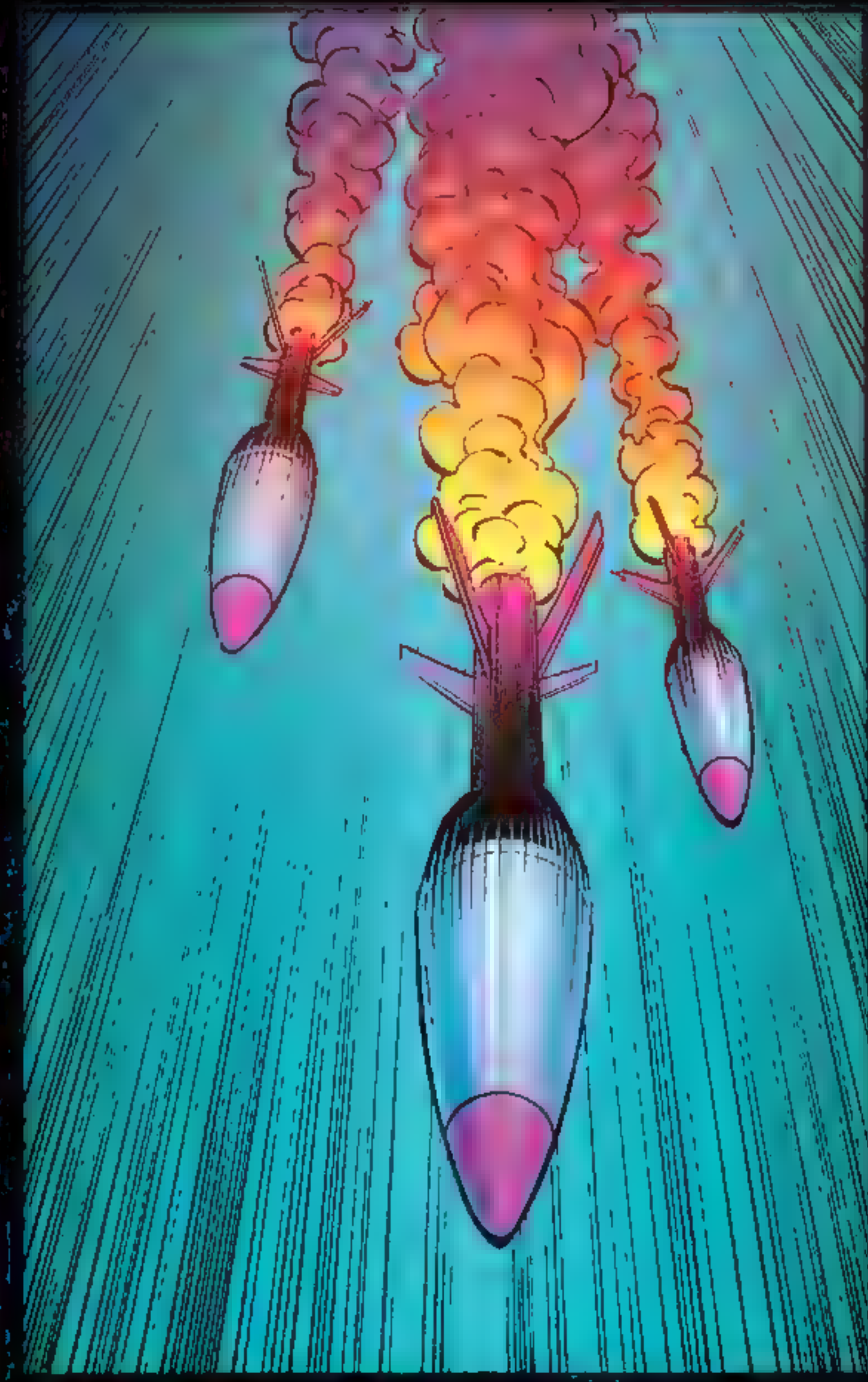


IT'S TRUE,
AND THEY PLAN ON
DOING IT SOON,
TOO. TOMORROW
NIGHT.

I KNOW THIS BECAUSE I'VE MET
THE MAN IN CHARGE OF THIS
GANG. **RED HOOD ONE**. AND I
KNOW HIS PLAN BECAUSE HE
TOLD ME THAT...



WHAT
IN--?



EVERYONE GET
DOWN!

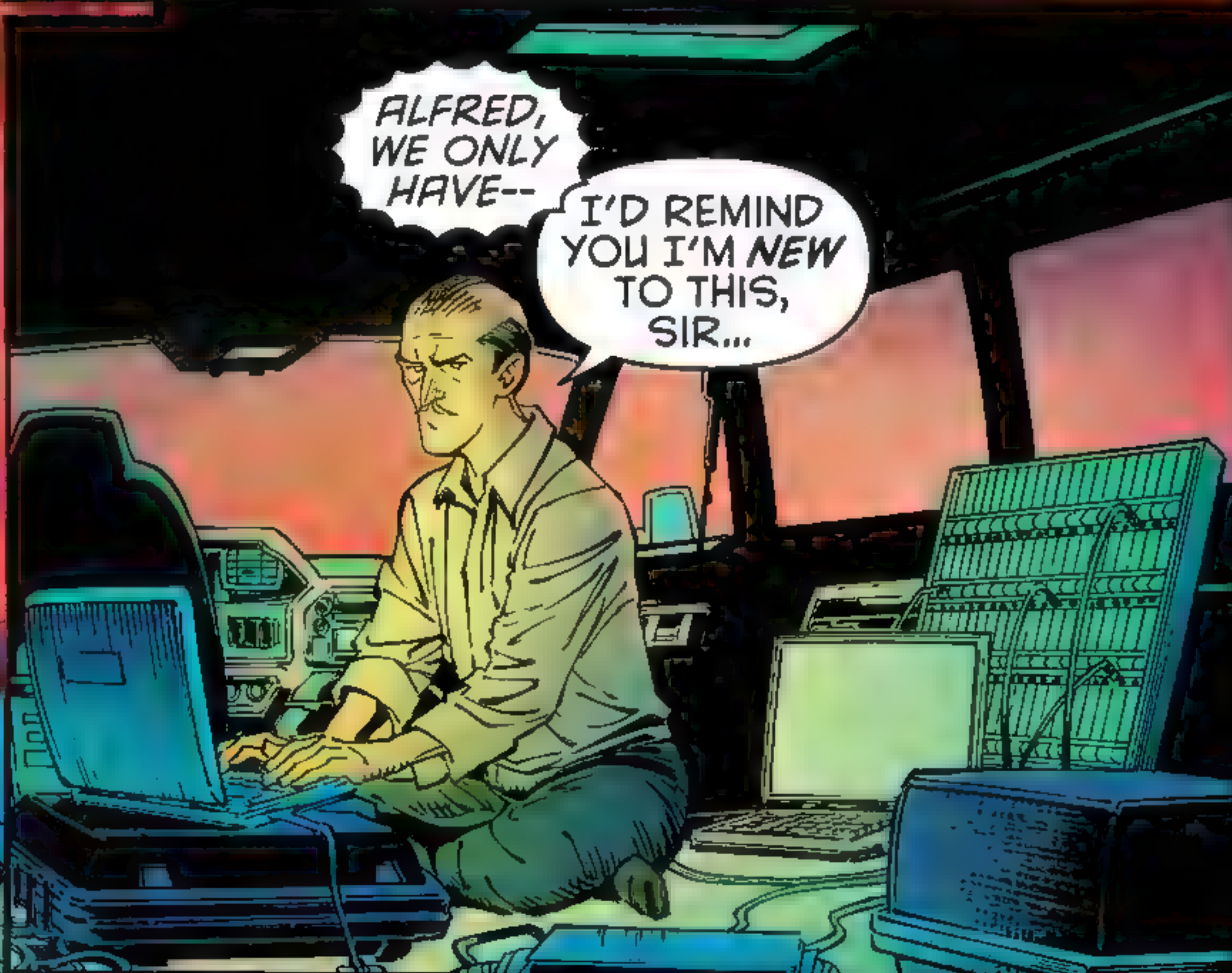




HEY, ALFRED...
...IT'S TIME.



WORKING ON IT, SIR.



ALFRED, WE ONLY HAVE--

I'D REMIND YOU I'M NEW TO THIS, SIR...



THERE!

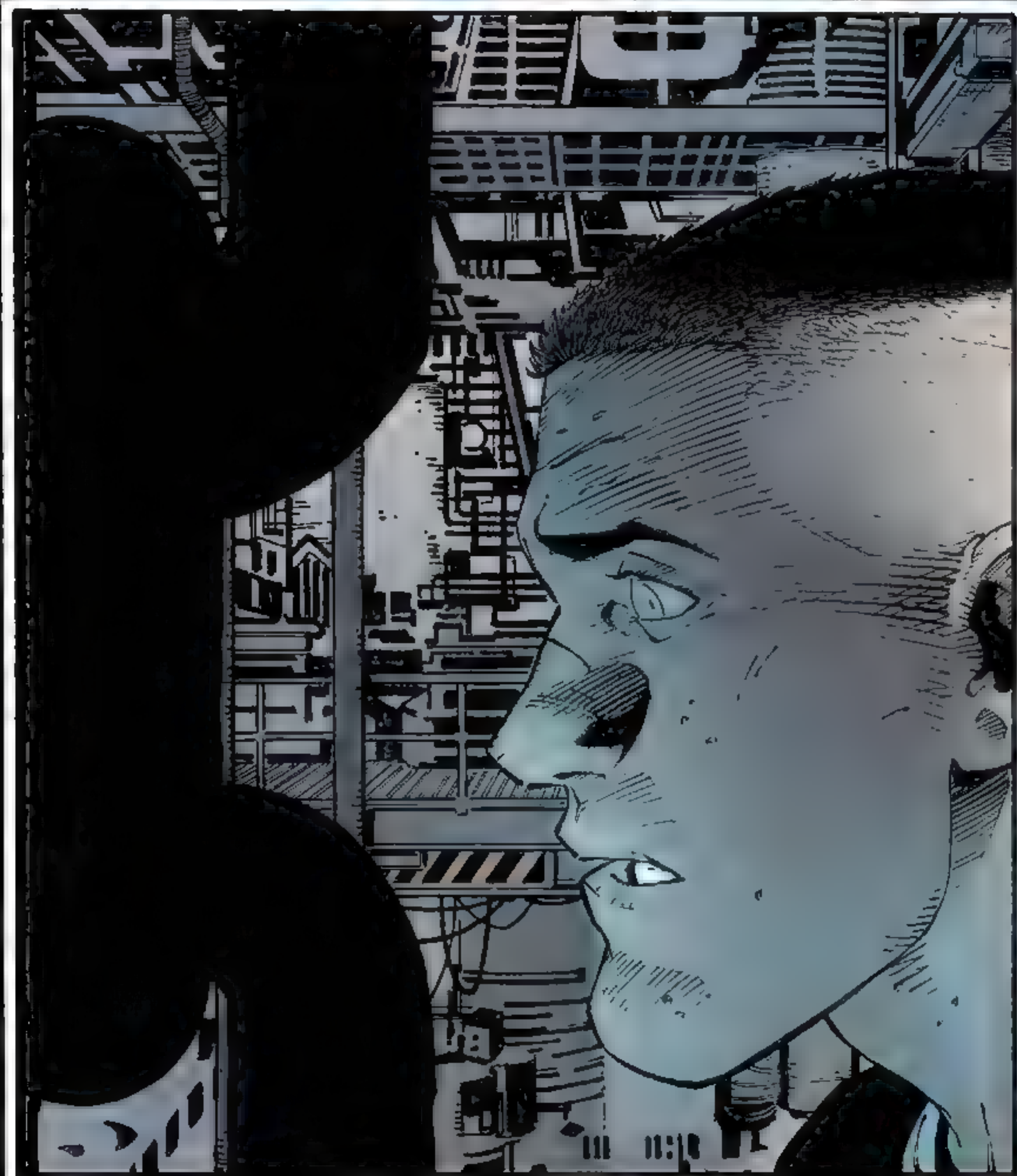
THANKS. KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE BAY GATES.



WE HAVE AN OPEN DOOR! COME ON! BE TOUGH, BE FAST AND BE CAREFUL...

"...THE PLACE IS A
GIANT DAMNED
DIRTY BOMB!"

...ALFRED, IT'S
WORSE THAN I
IMAGINED.



YEP.

IT IS.

HOW *SWEET* OF YOU, BRUCE. WE THREW *YOU* A PARTY AT YOUR PLACE ON YOUR BIG NIGHT, SO YOU DECIDED TO THROW US ONE ON *OURS*. VERY THOUGHTFUL.

LET'S JUST MAKE IT A LITTLE MORE *EXCLUSIVE*, SHALL WE?

SHUT THE DOORS!

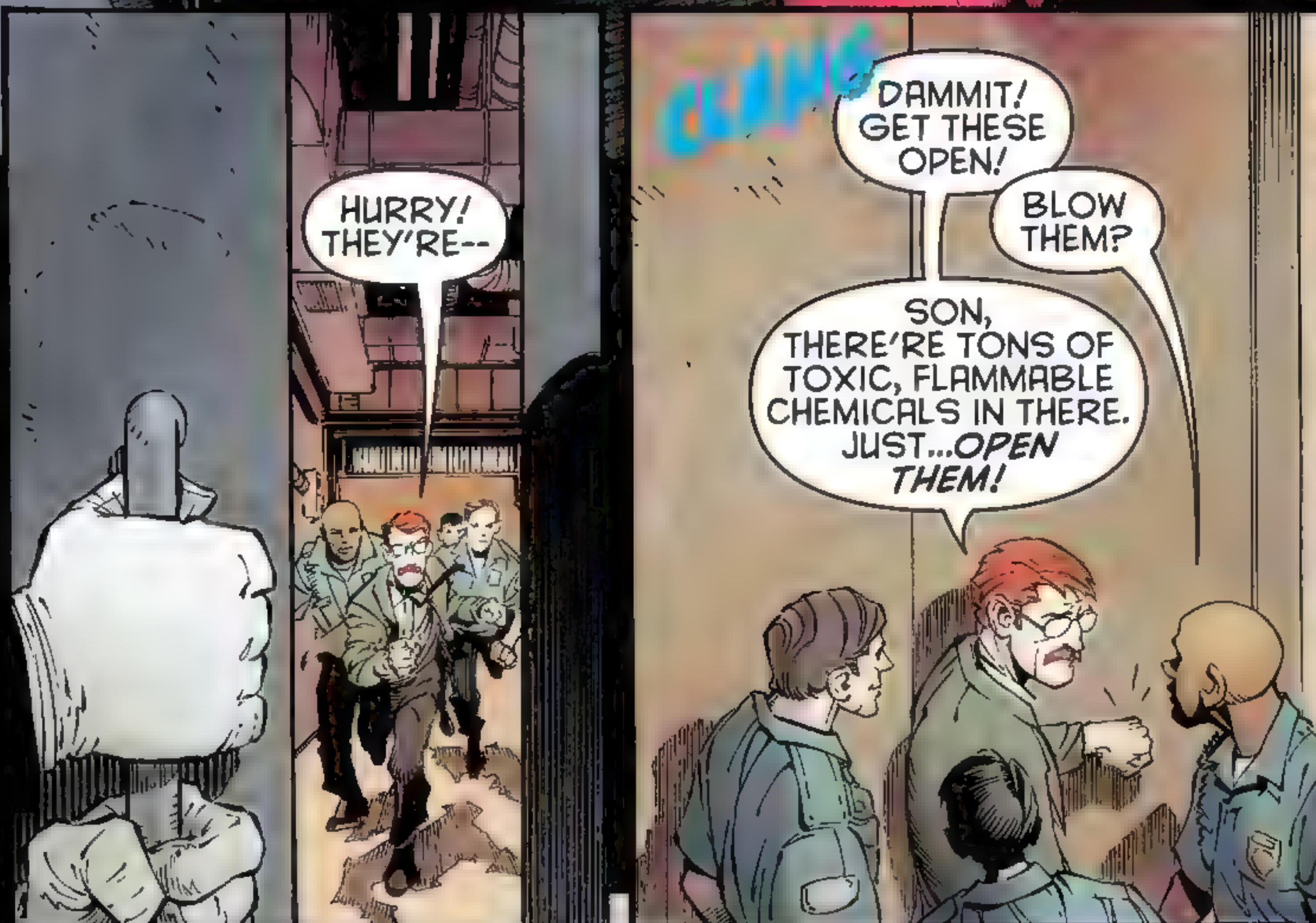


HURRY! THEY'RE--

DAMMIT! GET THESE OPEN!

BLOW THEM?

SON, THERE'RE TONS OF TOXIC, FLAMMABLE CHEMICALS IN THERE. JUST...*OPEN THEM!*



I MUST SAY, I'M IMPRESSED, BRUCE.

FIGURING THIS OUT ON YOUR OWN. I SUPPOSE YOU GOT YOUR *UNCLE* TO COUGH UP THE KEYS TO THE TRACKING HUB, SAW THE SHAPE OF THINGS...

...BUT REALIZING THAT WE WERE ENACTING THE PLAN TOMORROW, ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR PARENTS' *DEATH*...

...AND NOW, CHARGING IN HERE LIKE A ONE-MAN CAVALRY...I'VE GOT A NEWFOUND RESPECT FOR YOU, *HOSS*.

THE PLACE IS SURROUNDED, HOOD. GIVE THIS UP.

SURROUNDED BY WHO? BY *COPS*? I HAVE HALF OF THEM IN THE GANG, BRUCE. NO, SEE, HERE'S WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN...



"...RIGHT NOW, WE'RE LOADING WHAT WE CAN OF OUR '*COCKTAIL*,' AS YOU CALLED IT, ONTO TRUCKS..."

"...IT'S NOT QUITE READY YET, STILL BUBBLING, TOILING AND TROUBLING, BUT SO BE IT. THOSE TRUCKS WILL EXIT THIS PLACE THROUGH THE BACK TUNNELS WHERE THERE WILL BE NO *RESISTANCE*, SEEING AS NO ONE'S HAD TIME TO SET ANY UP...."

"...ONCE THE TRUCKS LEAVE, WE WILL, TOO. AND YOUR FRIENDS, THE GOOD OLD G.C.P.D., WILL RUSH IN..."

"...JUST AS THE WHOLE PLACE... WELL, GOES *BOOM*."

AND HONESTLY, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE TO SEE THIS, AT THE END. THE CIRCLE OPENED FIFTEEN YEARS AGO WITH YOUR PARENTS' DEATHS, AND NOW IT CLOSES WITH *YOURS*, HERE, *TONIGHT*.

TOMORROW, IT WILL OPEN AGAIN WITH A *NEW GOTHAM*. A GOTHAM AWAKE TO THE *TRUTH* OF THINGS--THE UGLY, WONDERFUL *TRUTH*.

YOU DON'T STAND FOR ANY TRUTH AT THE HEART OF *ANYTHING*.

YOU *PRETEND* YOU DO, TALKING ABOUT THE *RANDOMNESS* OF LIFE, THE MEANINGLESSNESS, BUT IT'S ALL A SHAM.

MY PARENTS' DEATH MIGHT HAVE BEEN MEANINGLESS, BUT THEIR *LIVES* WERE ANYTHING BUT. AND YES, IT ALL MIGHT END AT *ANY* MOMENT FOR ANY OF US, IN VIOLENCE OR NOT, BUT WHAT MATTERS IS WHAT WE DO *BEFORE* THAT.

THE LIVES WE LEAD. AND YOURS IS AN *ABOMINATION*. YOU'RE JUST AN EVIL MAN, *PRETENDING* TO HAVE A CAUSE.

YOU'RE SO FULL OF *#!%.*

IS THAT SO?

MAYBE THERE'S NO NEED TO KEEP YOU AROUND, BRUCE. I MEAN, YOU KNOW HOW ALL OF THIS IS GOING TO *END*.

AND SO, MAYBE IT'S BEST FOR THE CIRCLE TO...

CLK

...CLOSE?

WHAT'S GOING ON? THE COPS CUT THE POWER?

NO. THEY COULDN'T HAVE. WE MADE SURE...

NOW, WHILE THE POWER'S DOWN! GET THAT DOOR OPEN!

I GOT NOTHING! YOU?

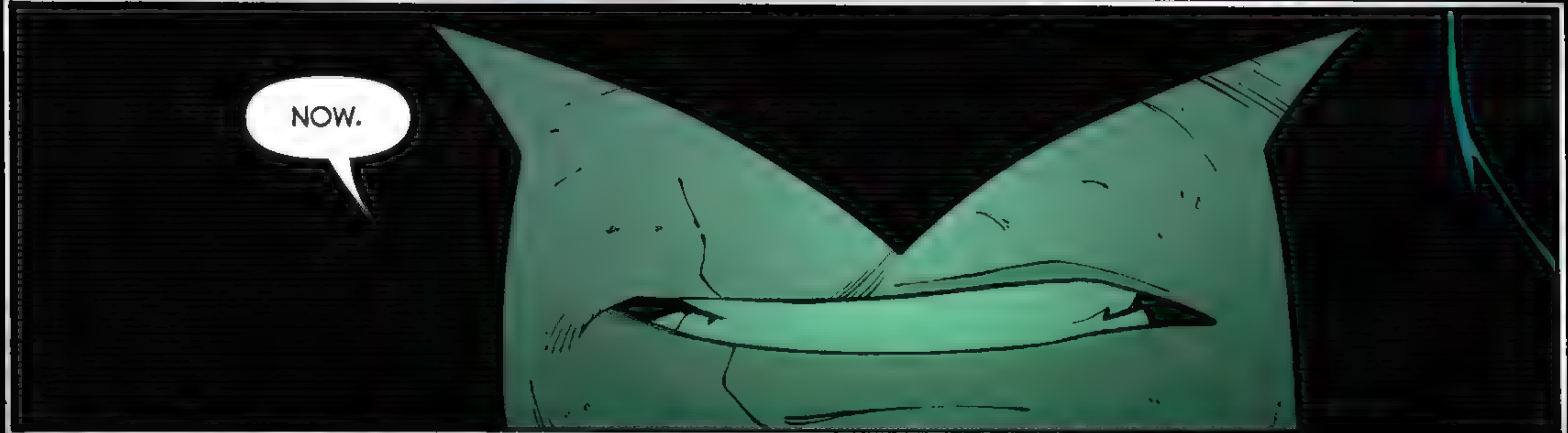
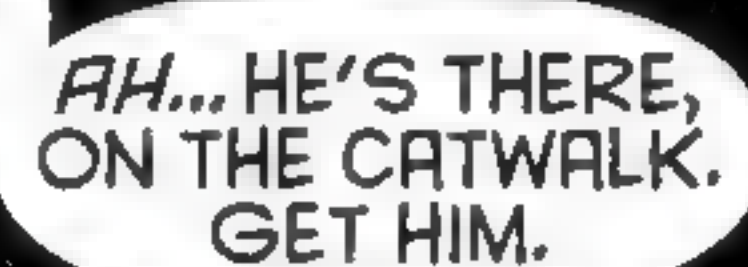
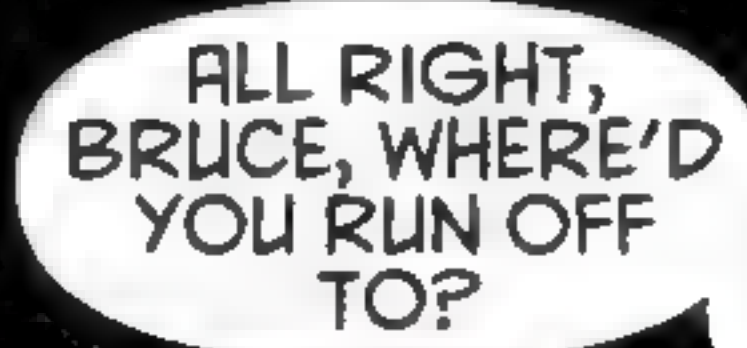
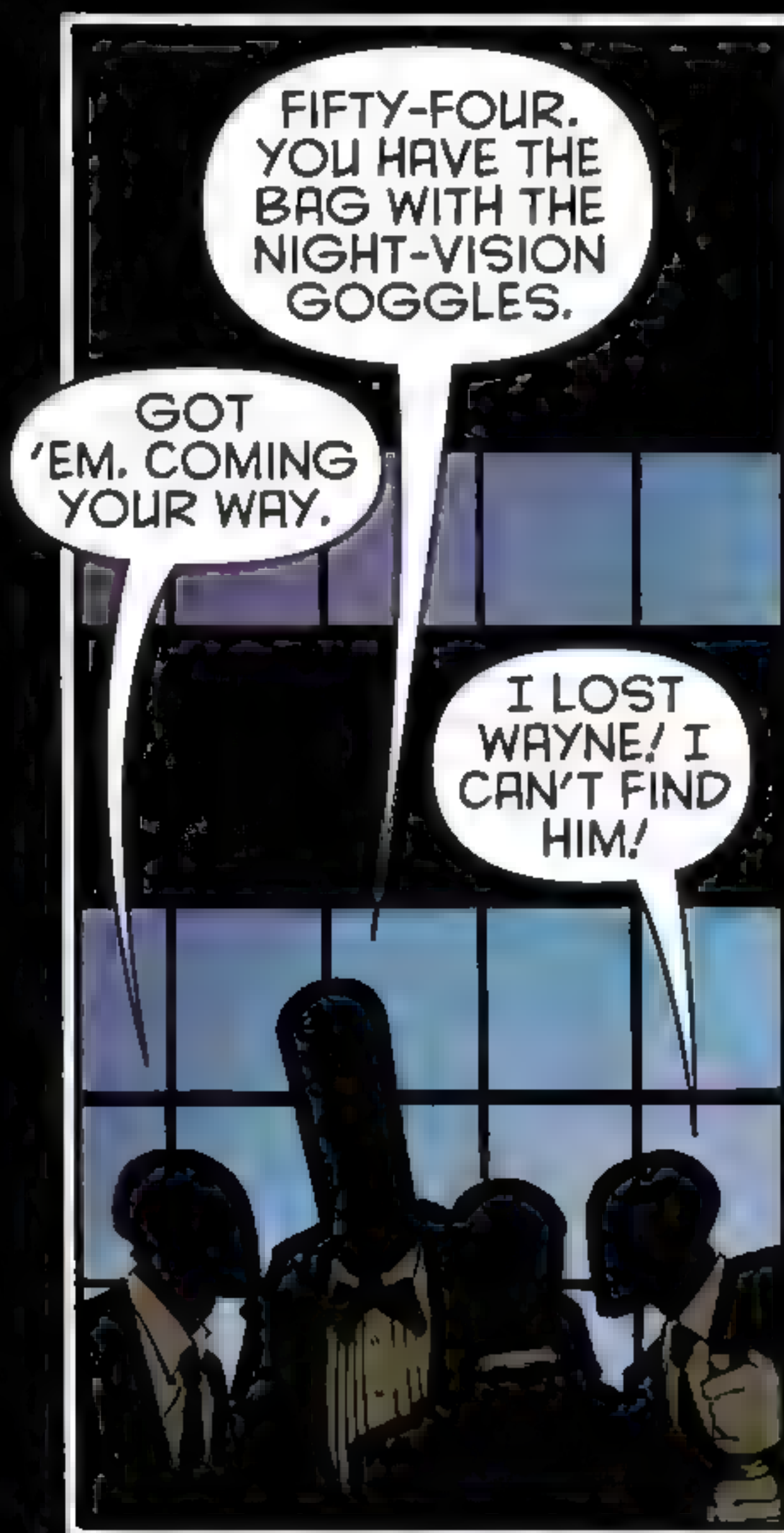
IT'S PITCH BLACK! WE'RE BLIND TO RIGHTS!

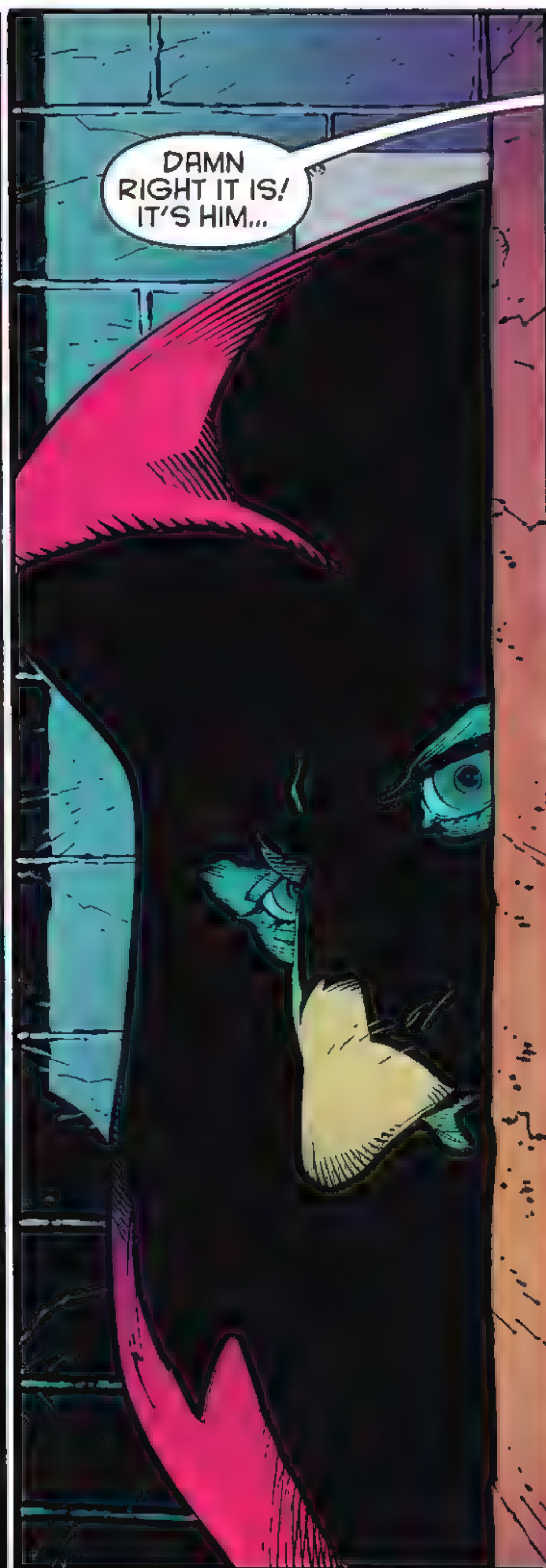
STATION, WE'RE CIRCLING BACK TO GET A BETTER LOOK...YES, A MASSIVE OUTAGE. THEY'RE SAYING THE WHOLE NEIGHBOR--

UH, DONNY...

...WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?





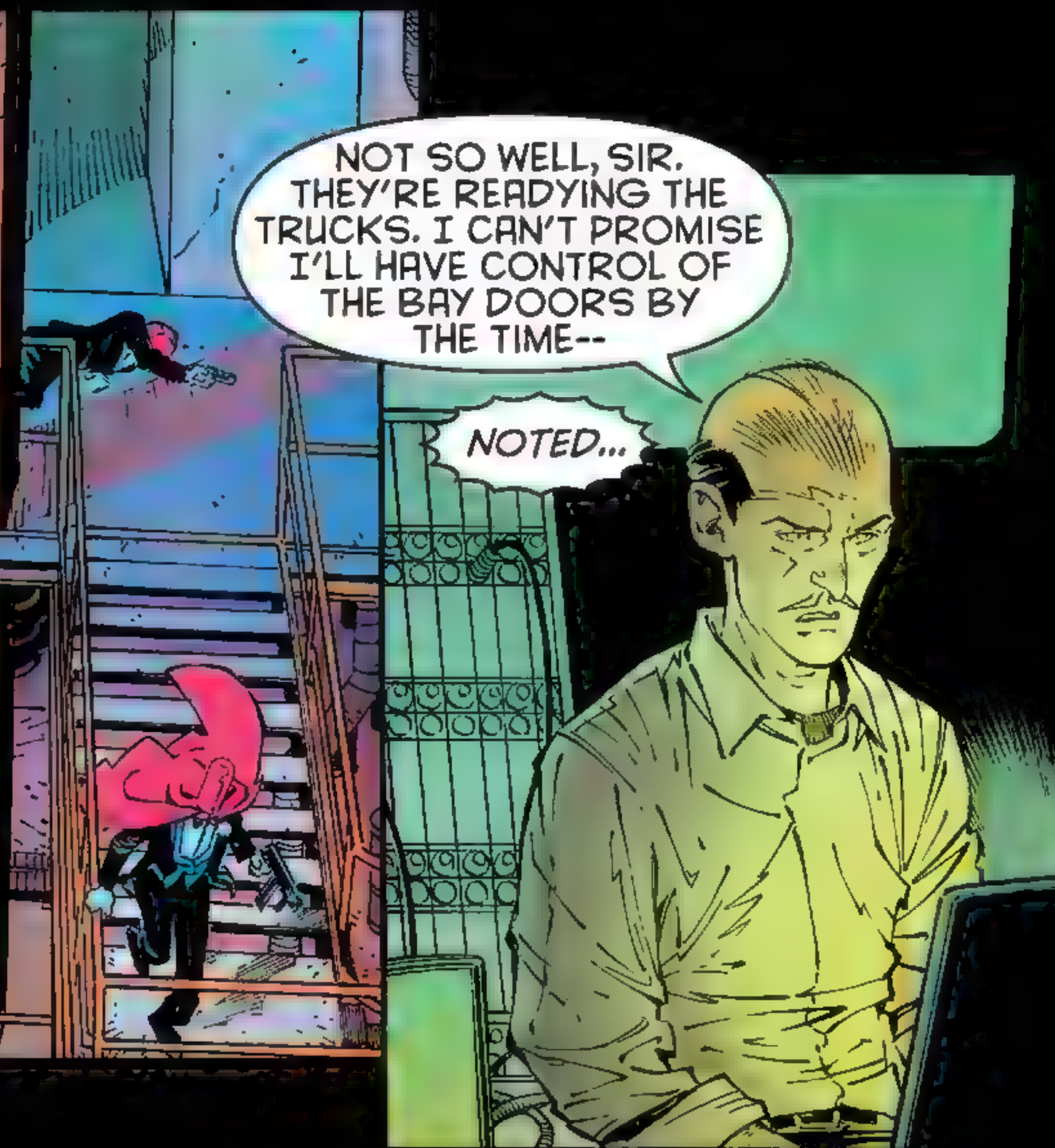
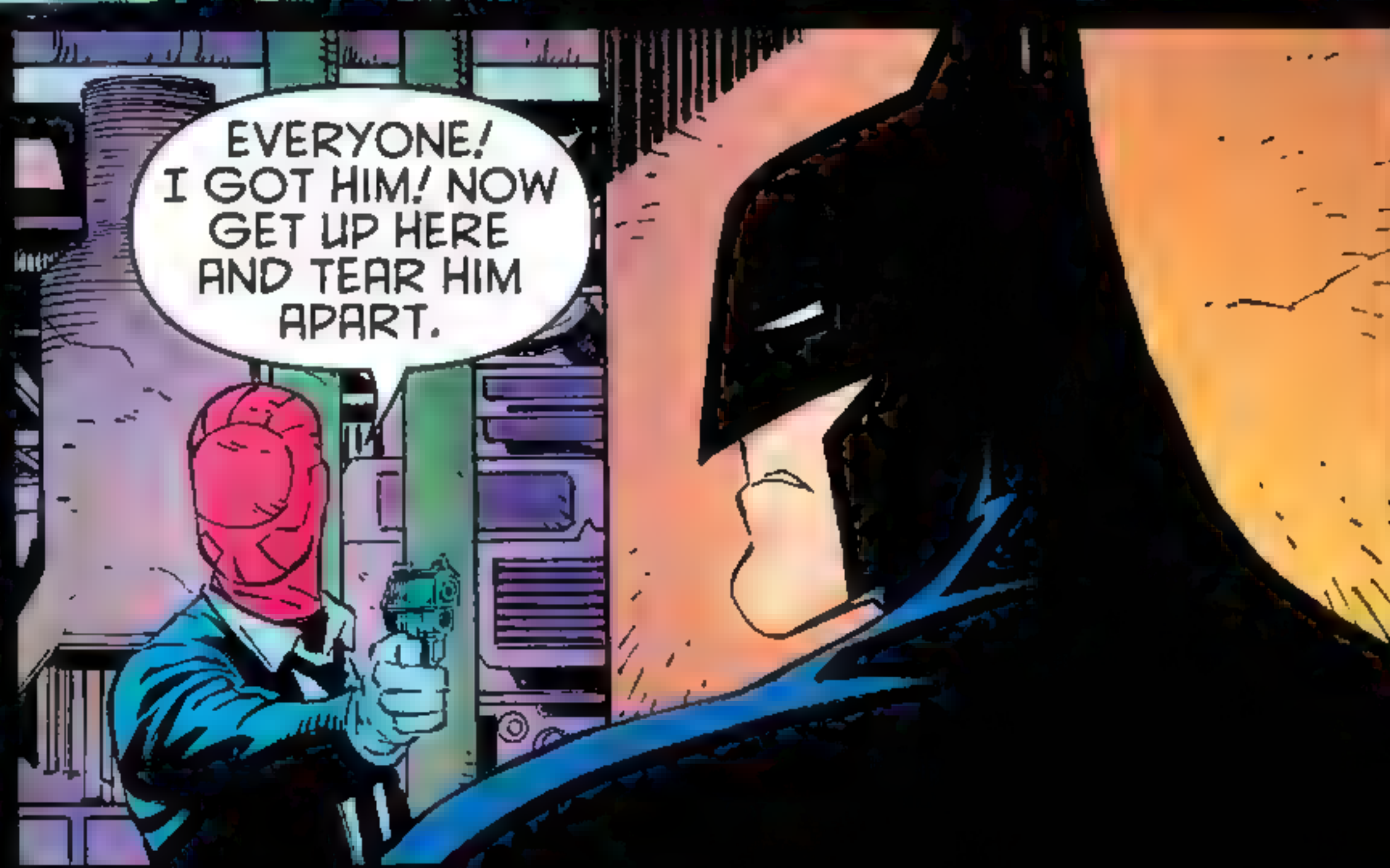
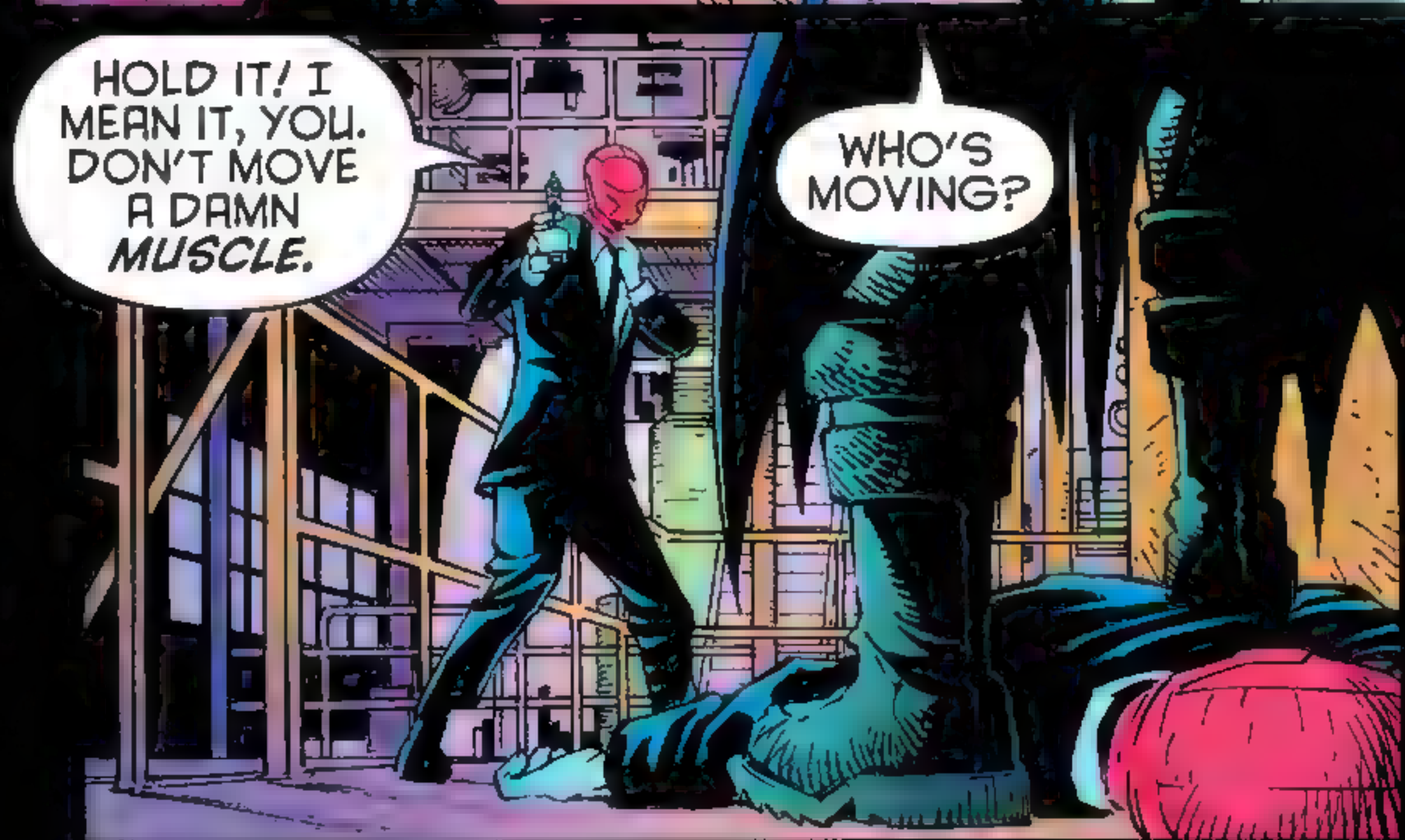
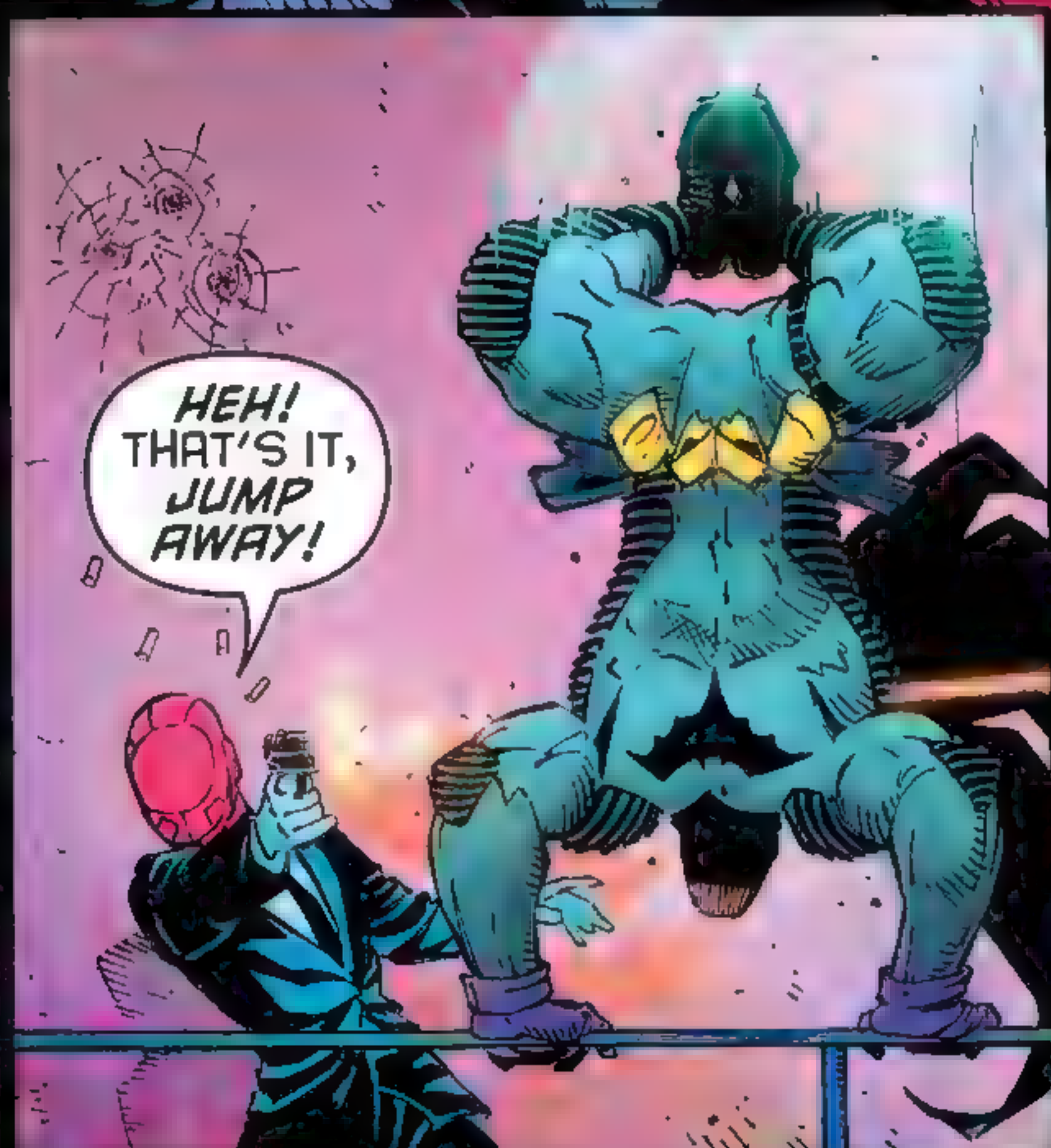




...IT'S THE
BAT!

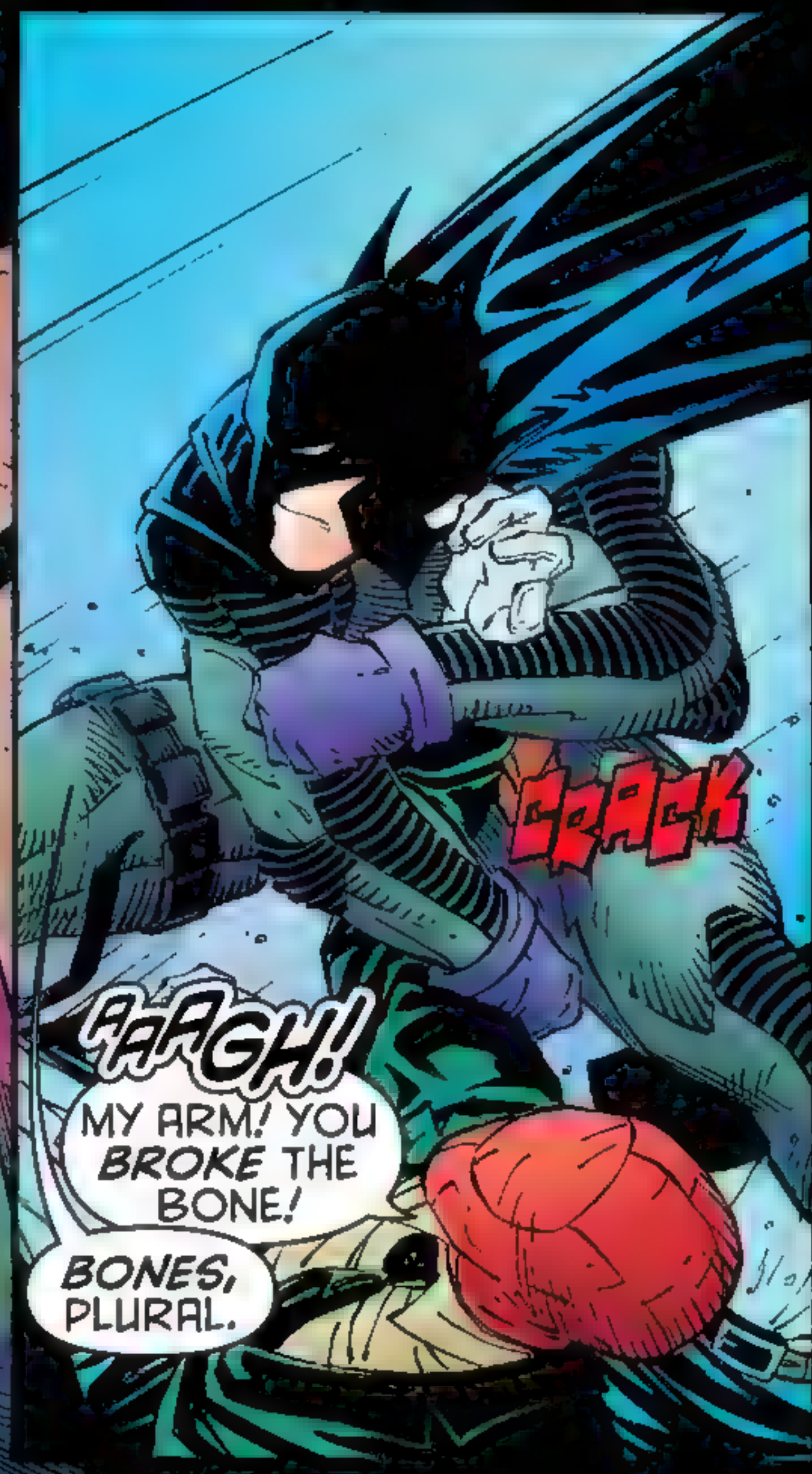


...HELLO...
THERE.





BACK
TO WORK,
THEN.



CRACK

AAAGH!
MY ARM! YOU
BROKE THE
BONE!

BONES,
PLURAL.



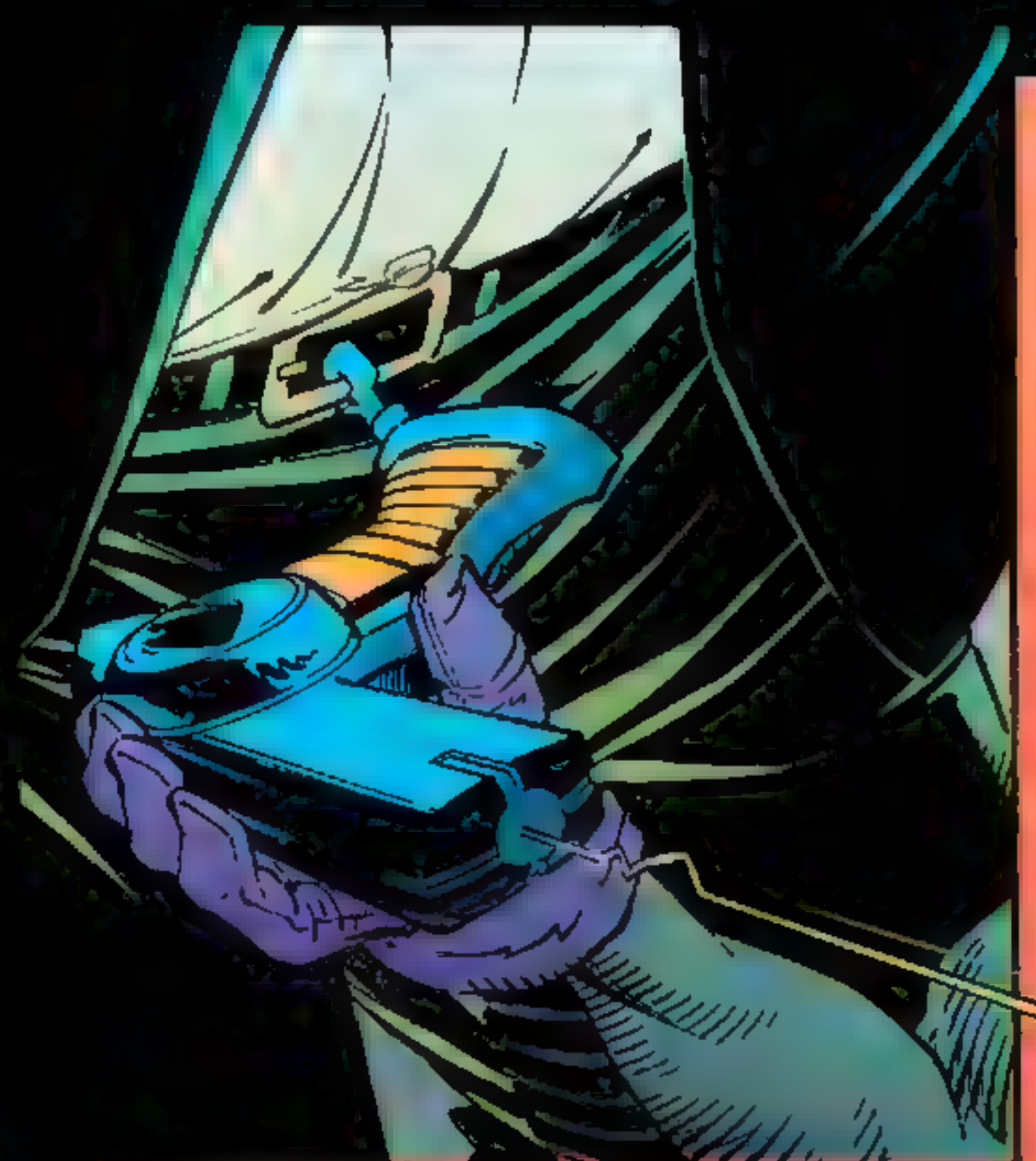
OUT OF MY
WAY! LET ME
TAKE HIM!



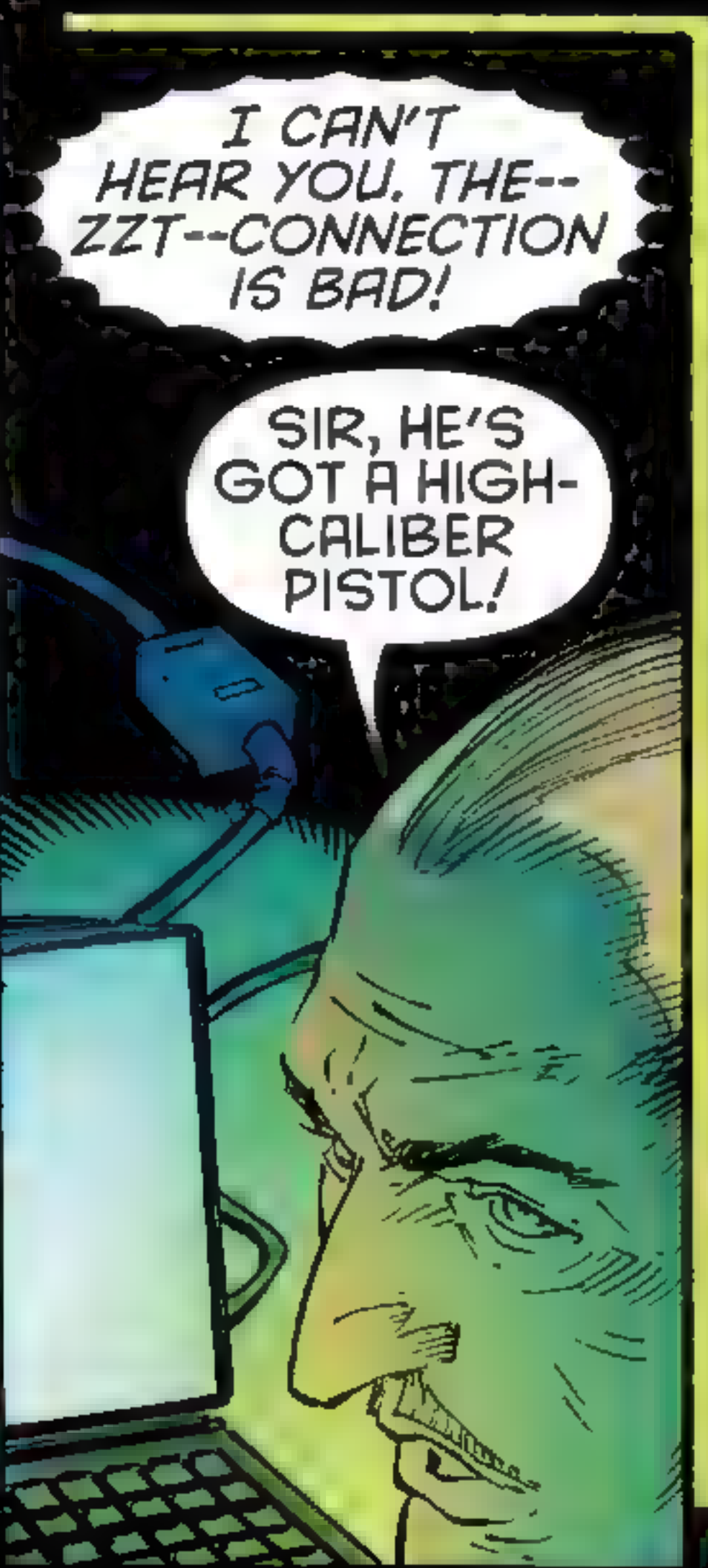
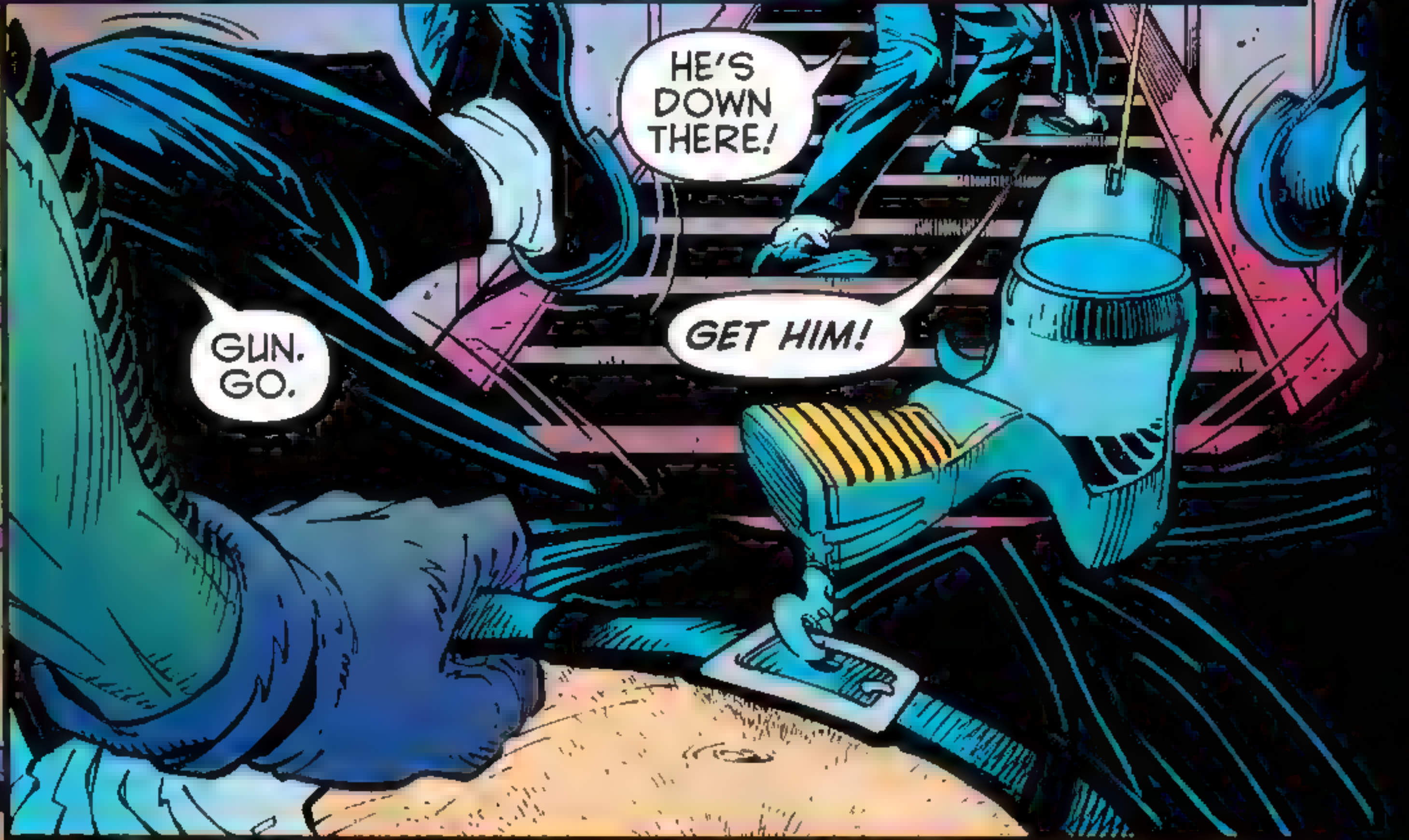
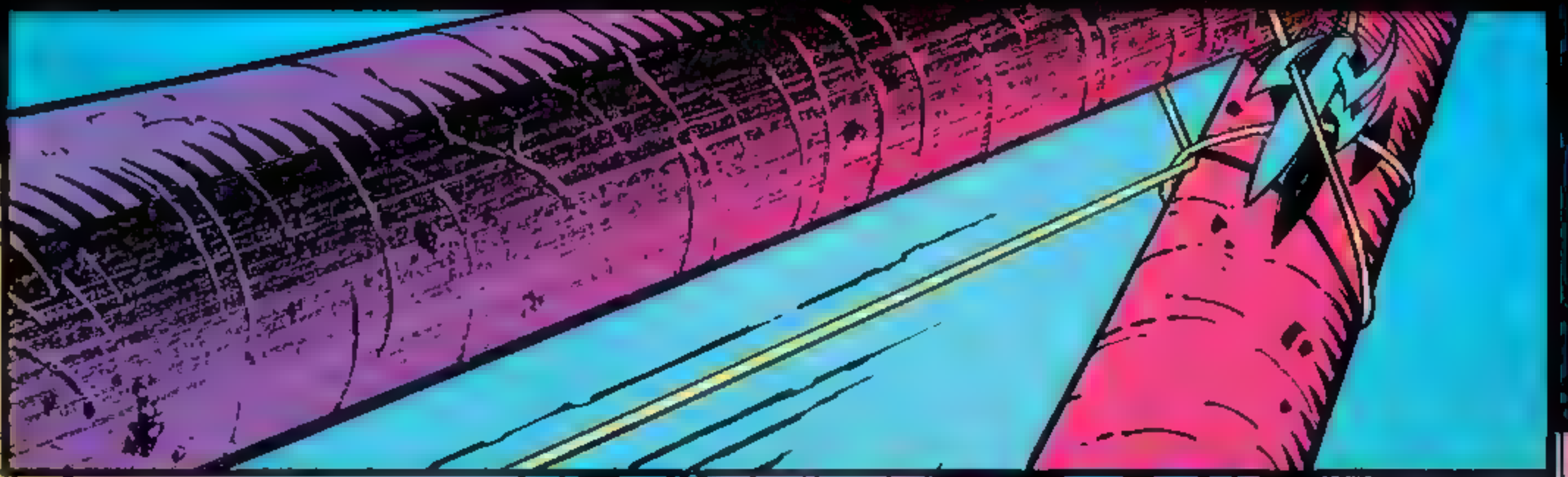
I'LL GORE
HIM LIKE A
BULL.

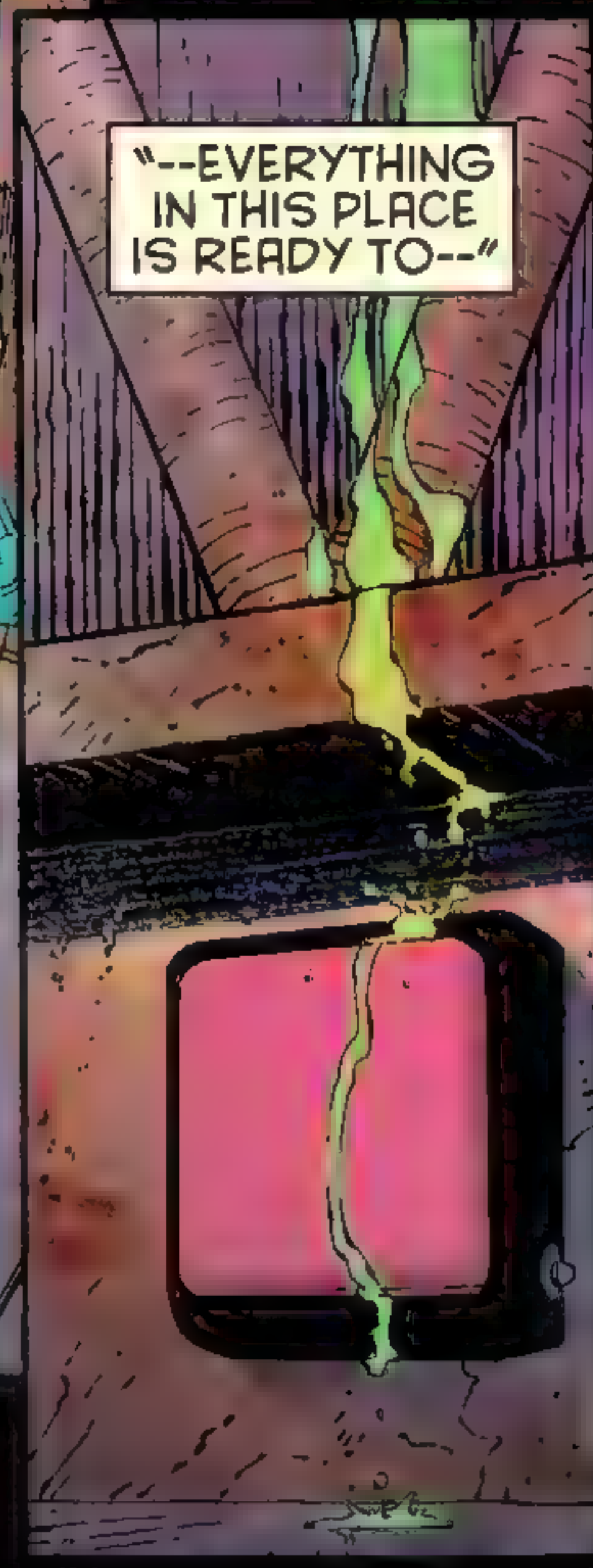
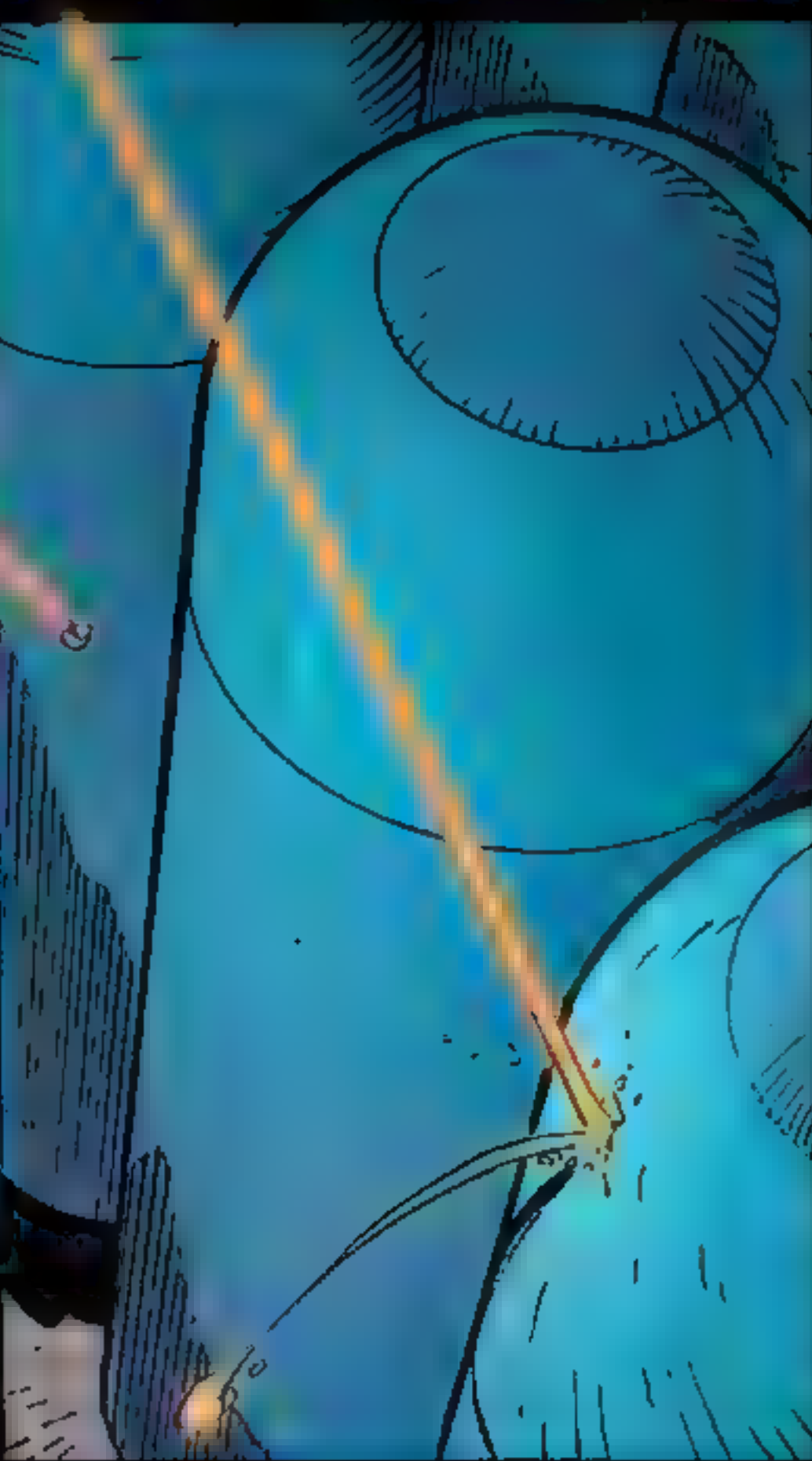
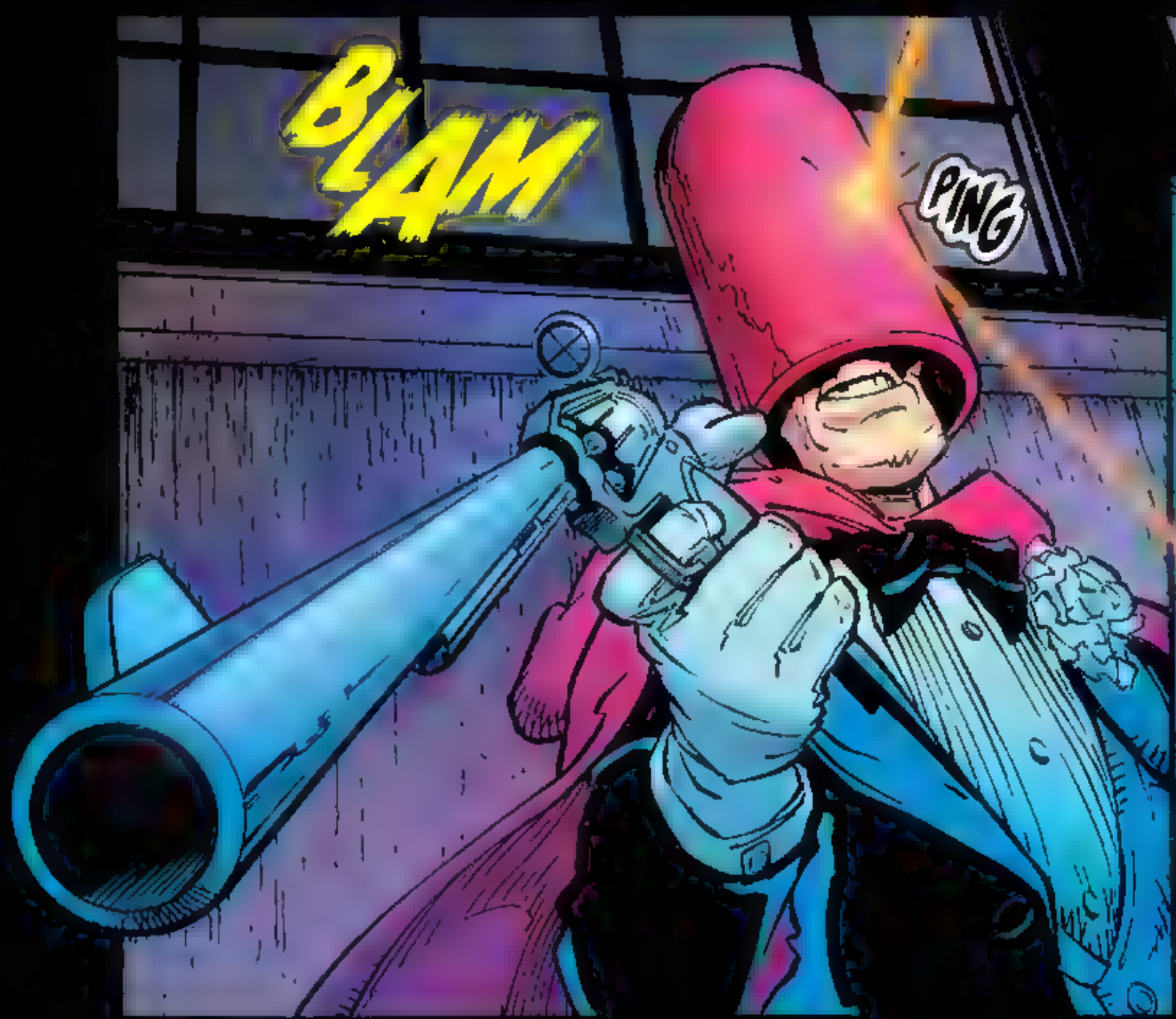


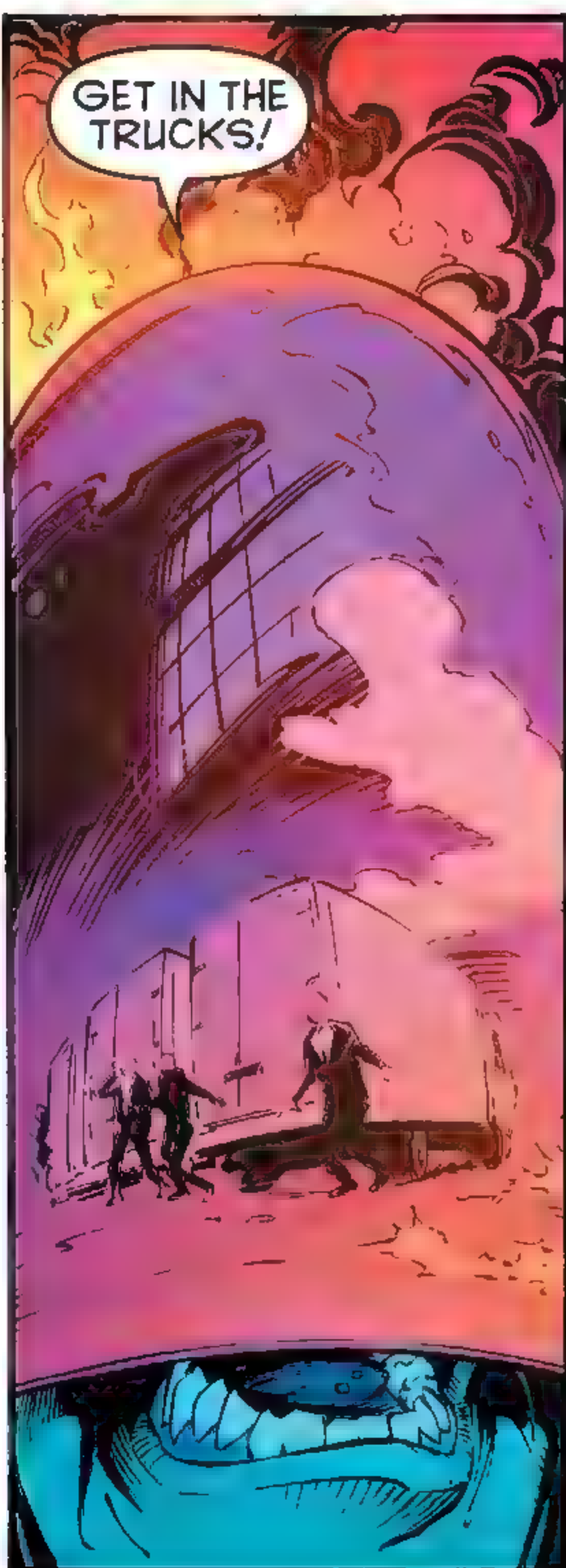
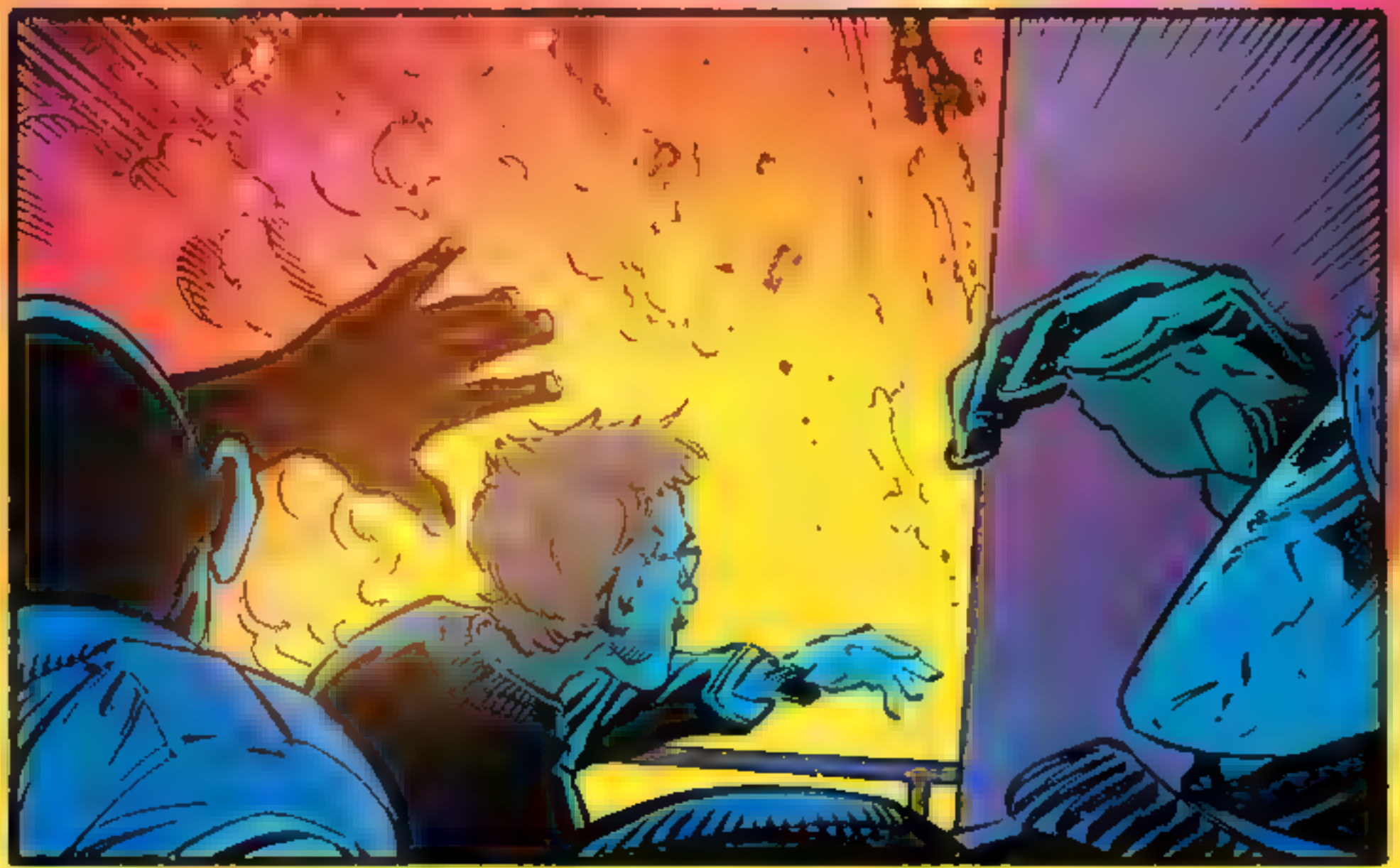
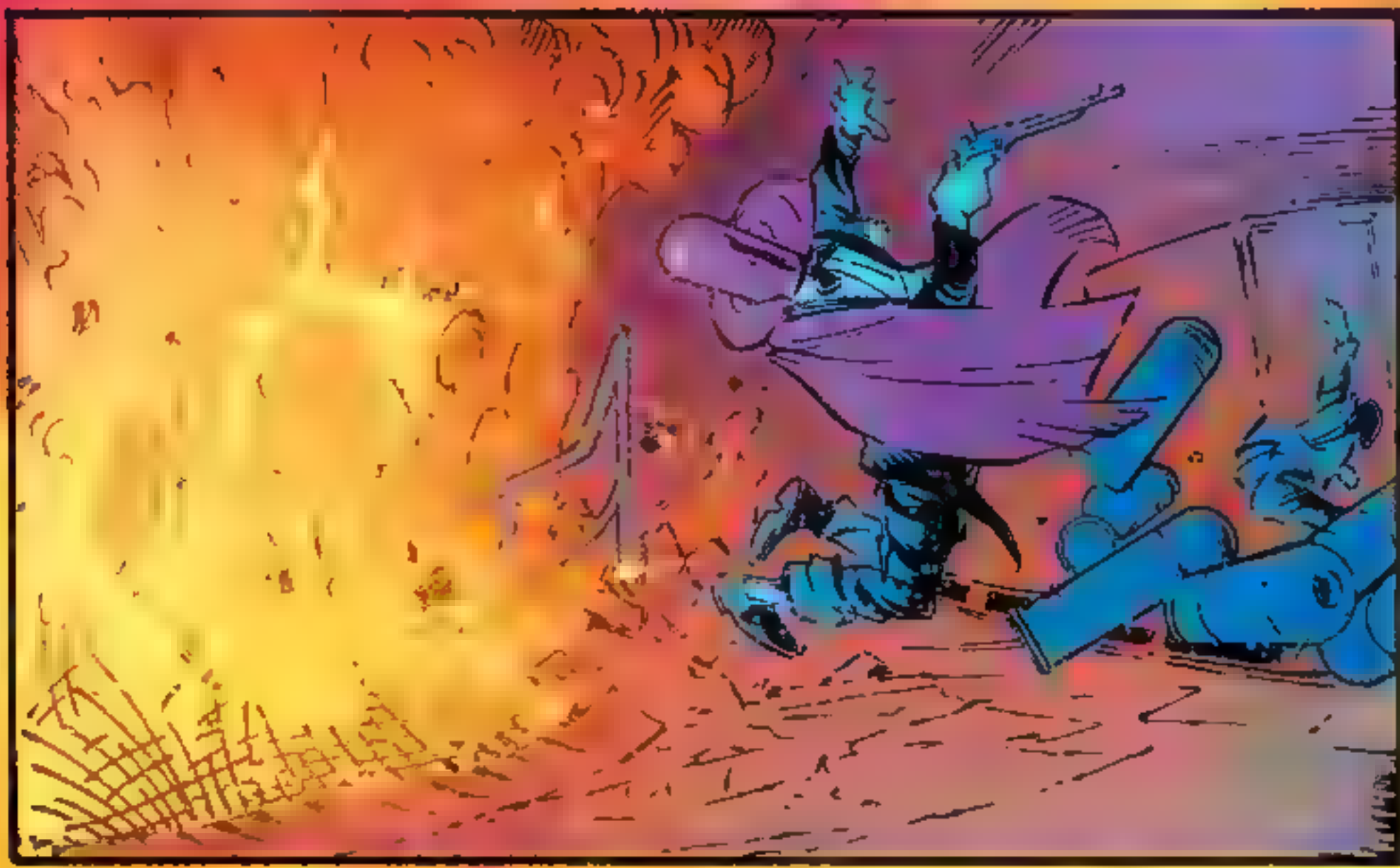
WELCOME
TO THE RODEO,
ASS--



YEE-
HA.









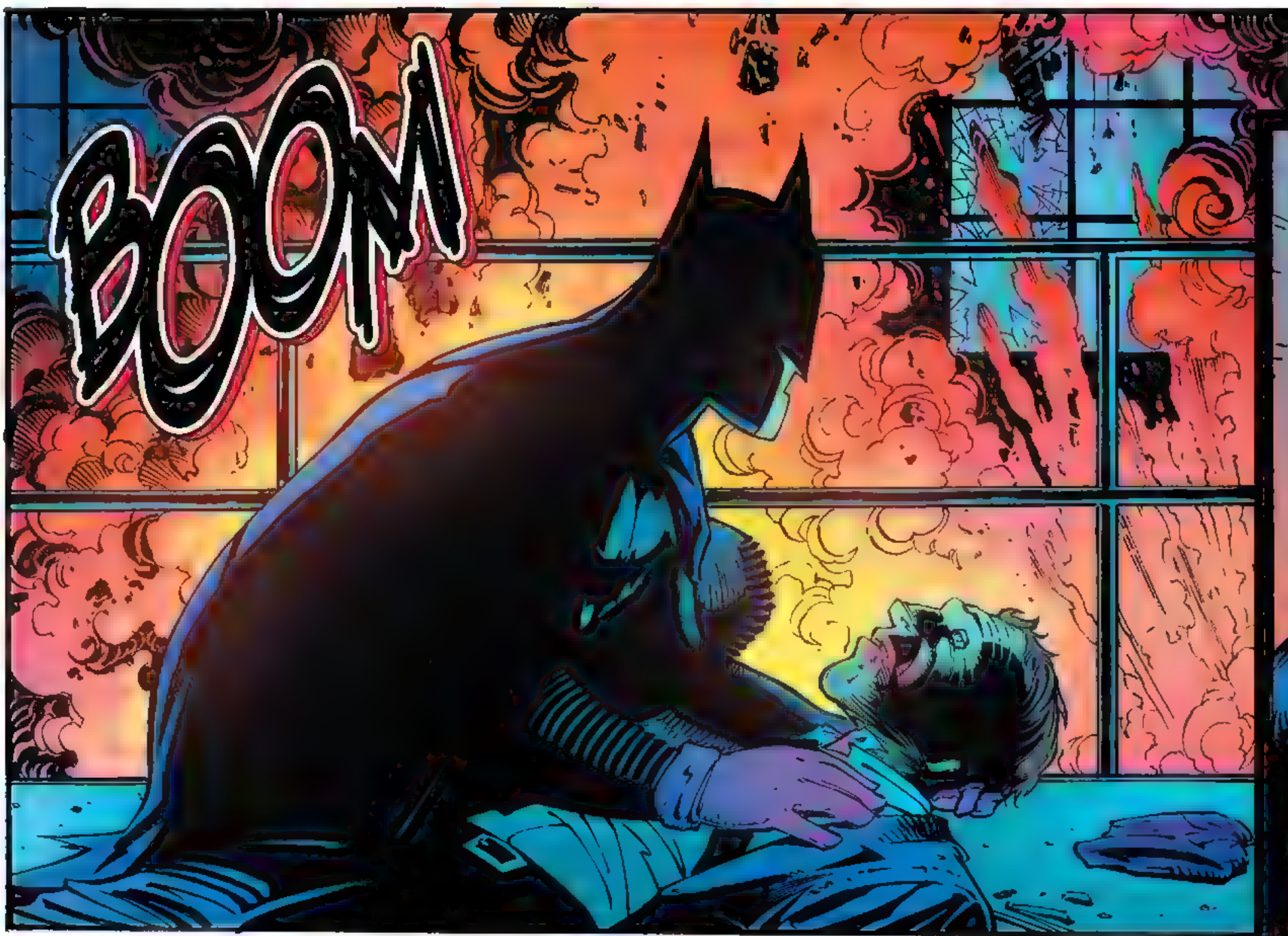
HEH.
AND SO GO
PLANS...



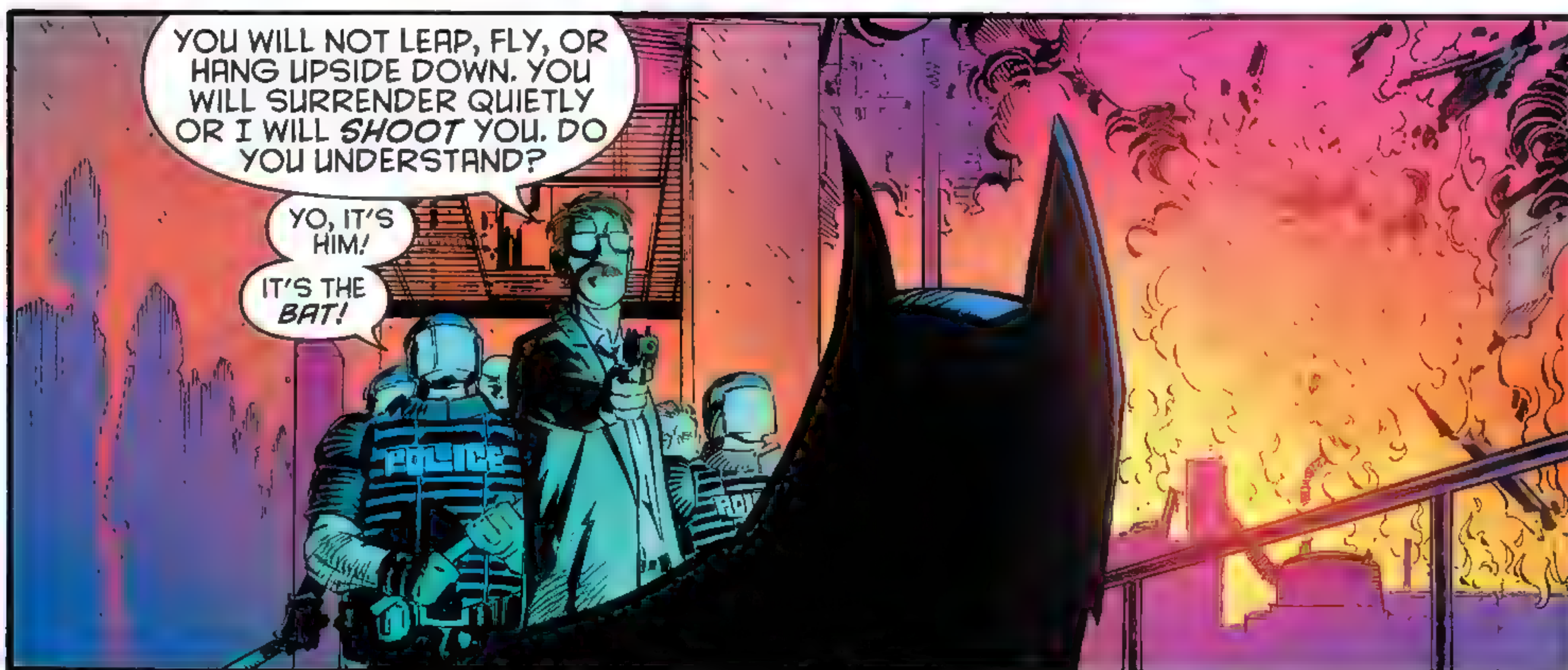
PLEASE
DON'T BE...



...PHILIP.



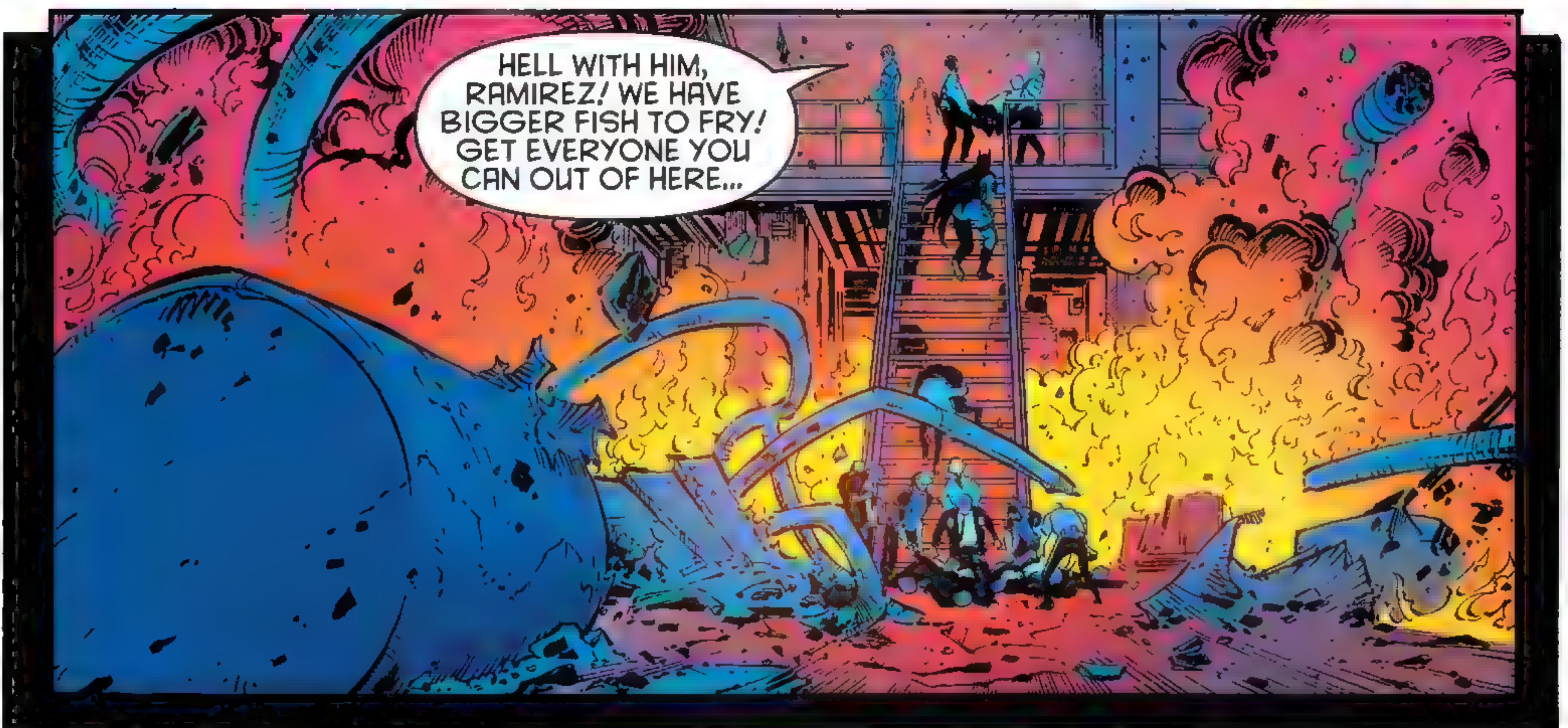
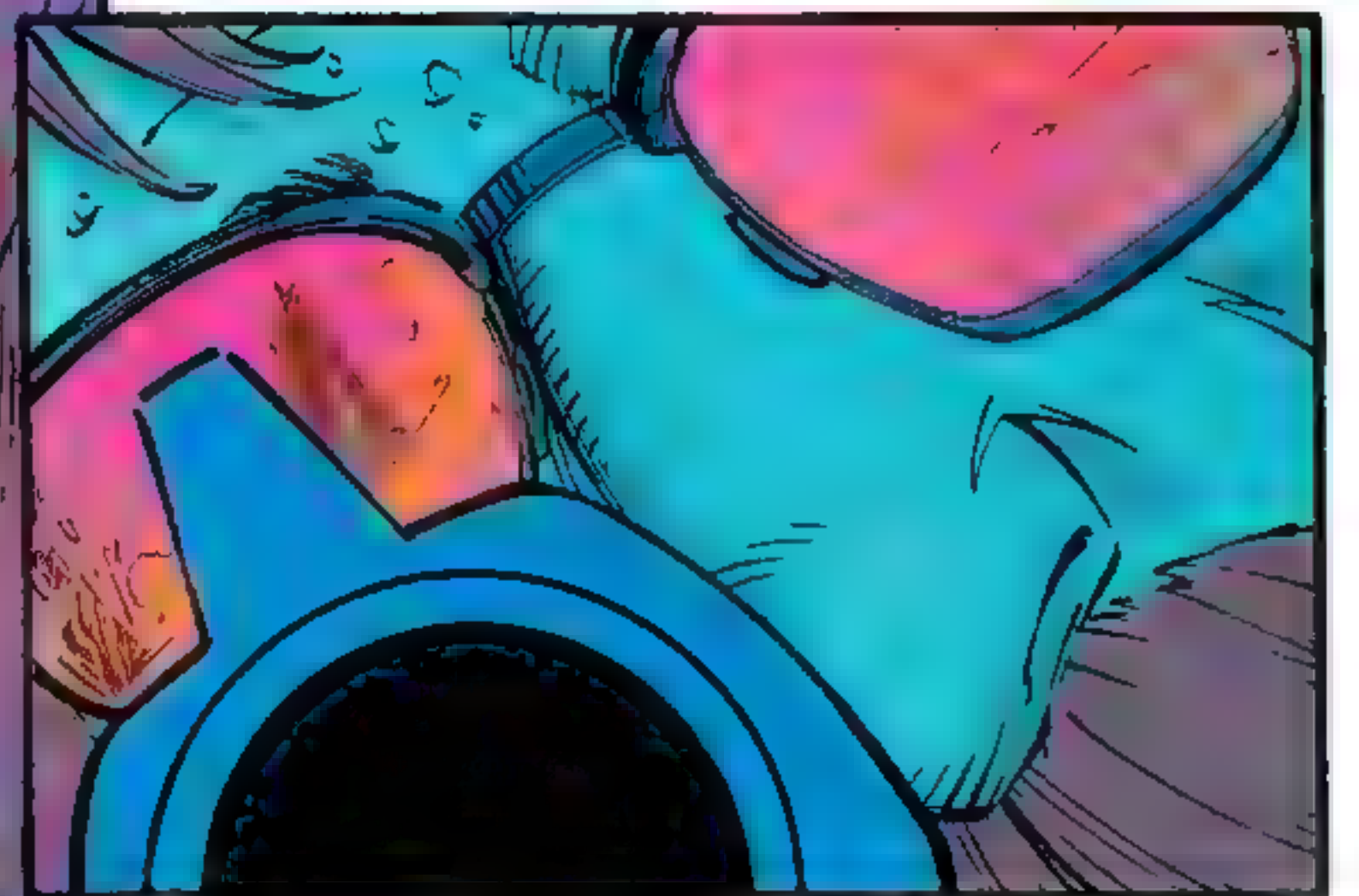
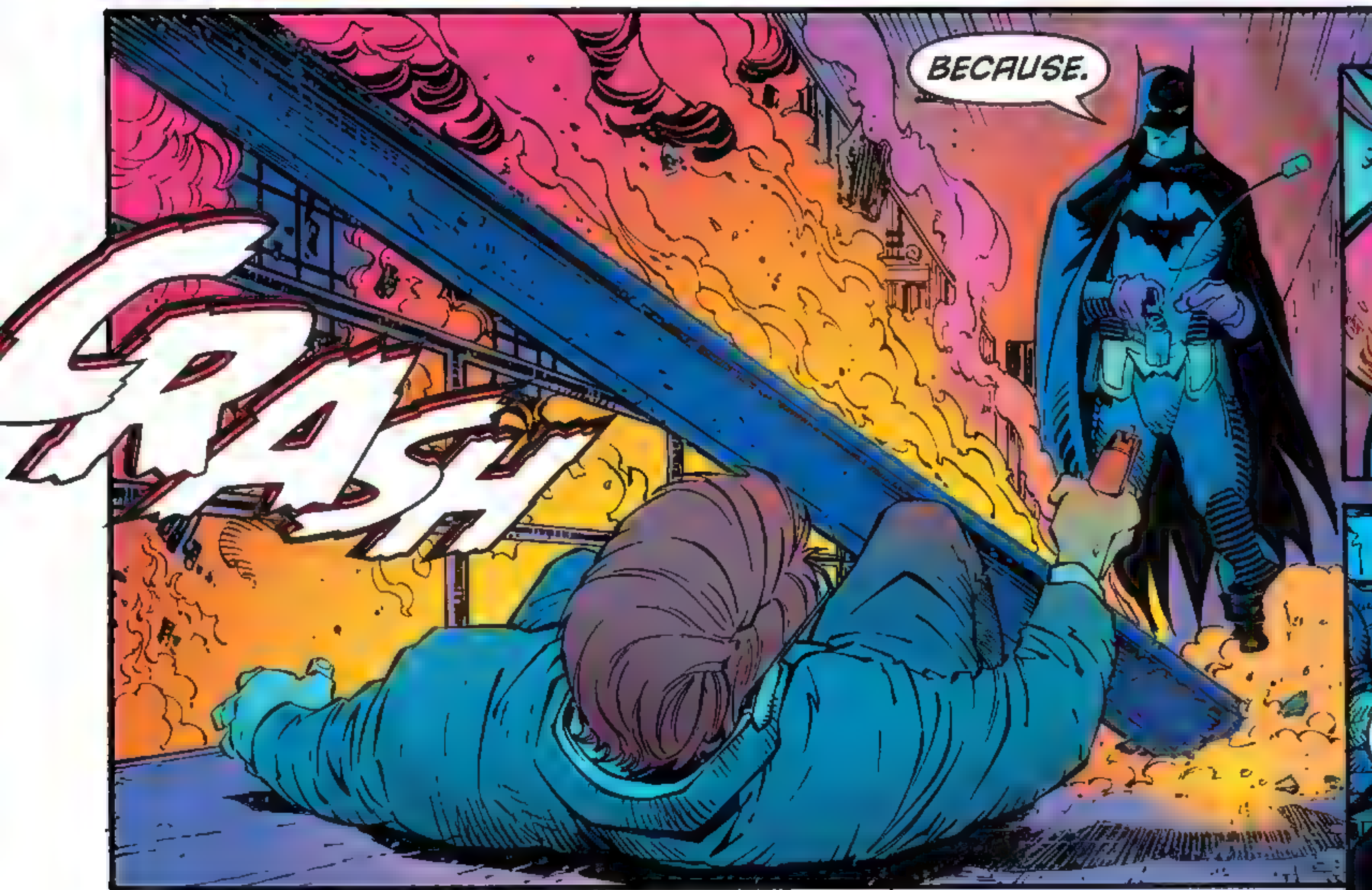
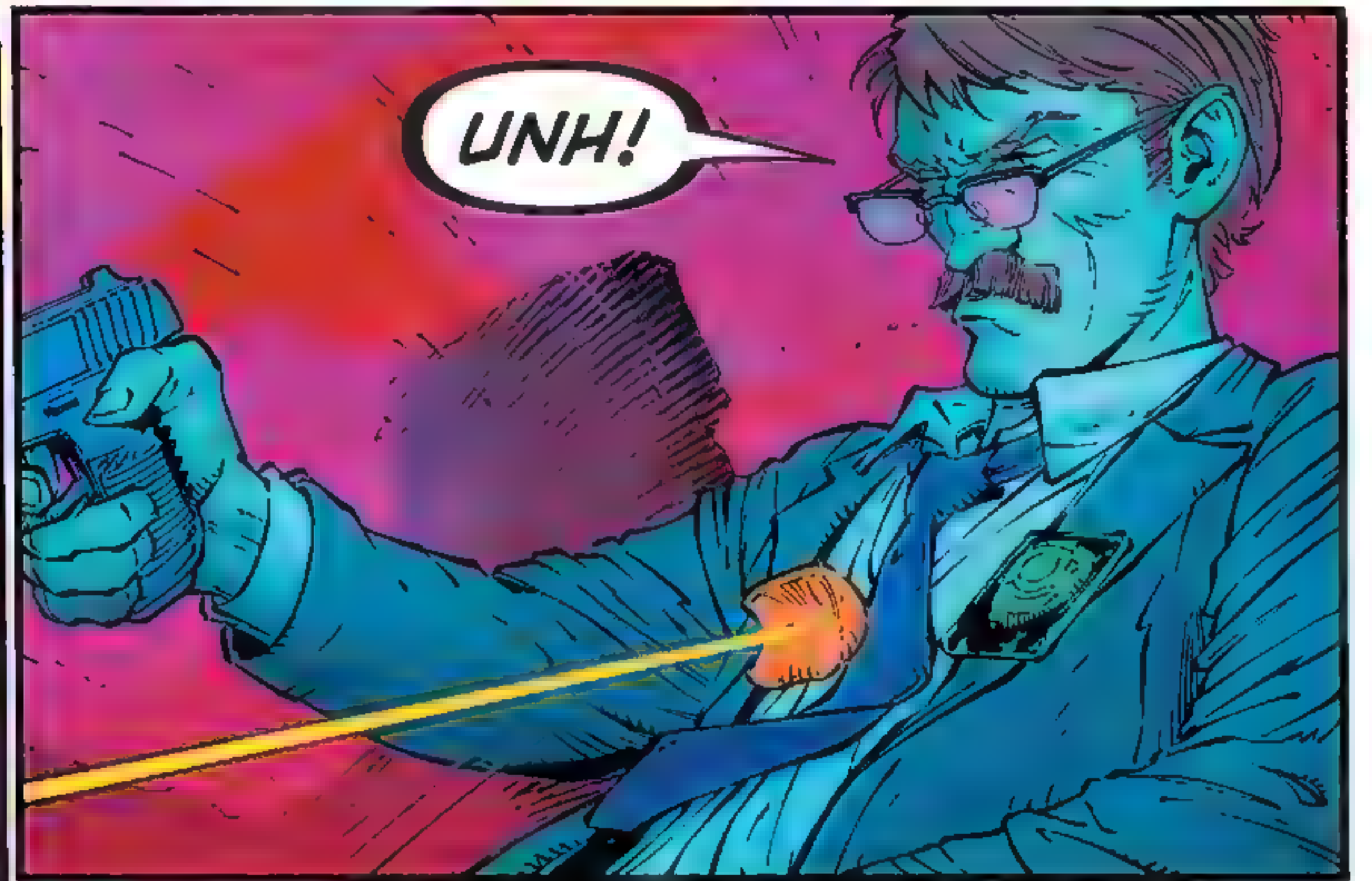
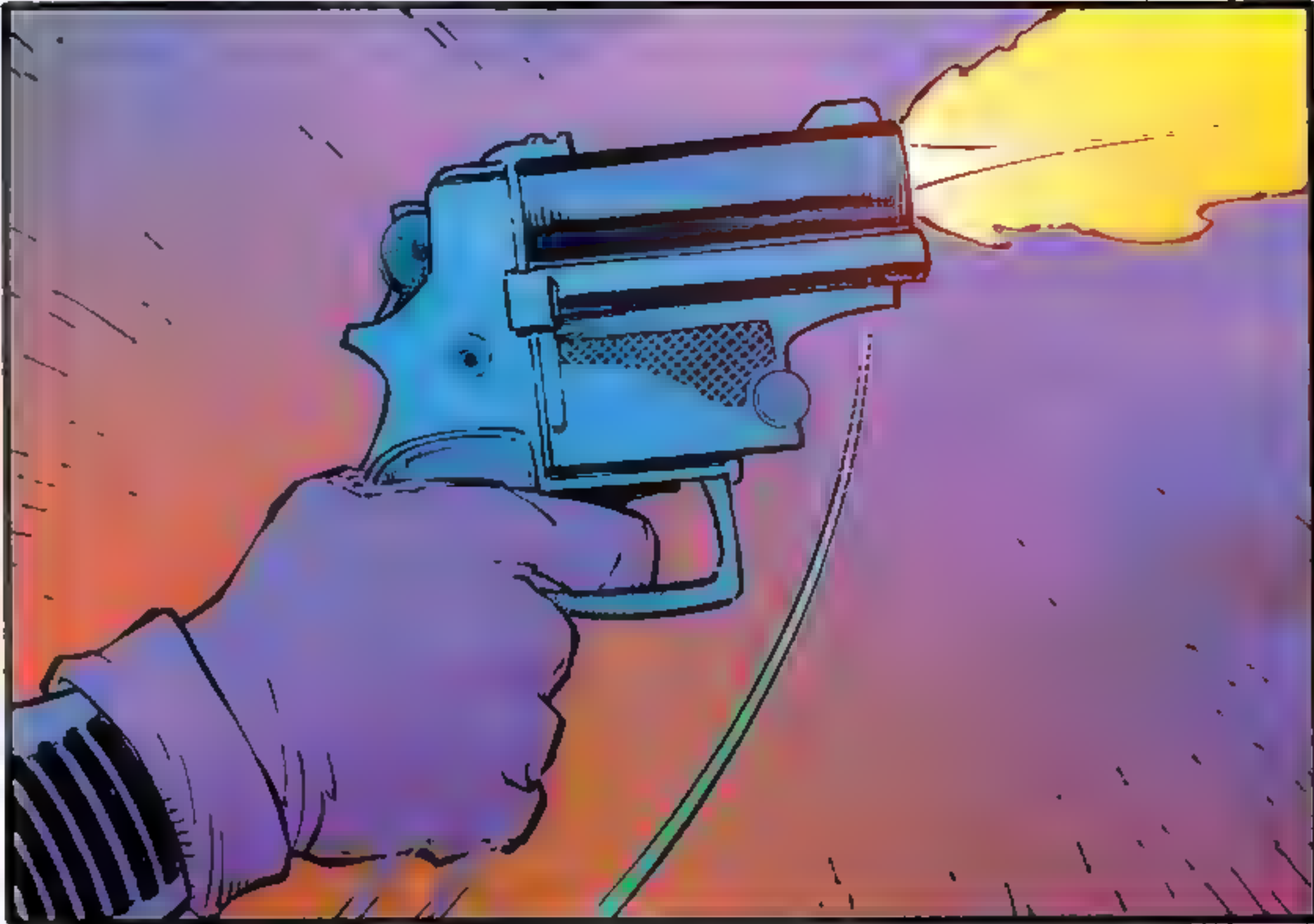
FREEZE!



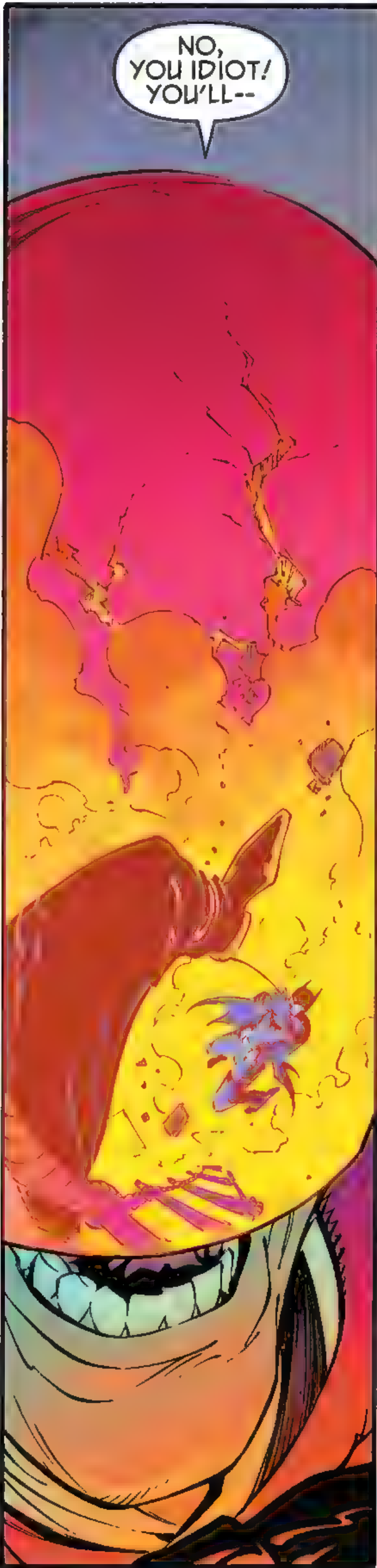
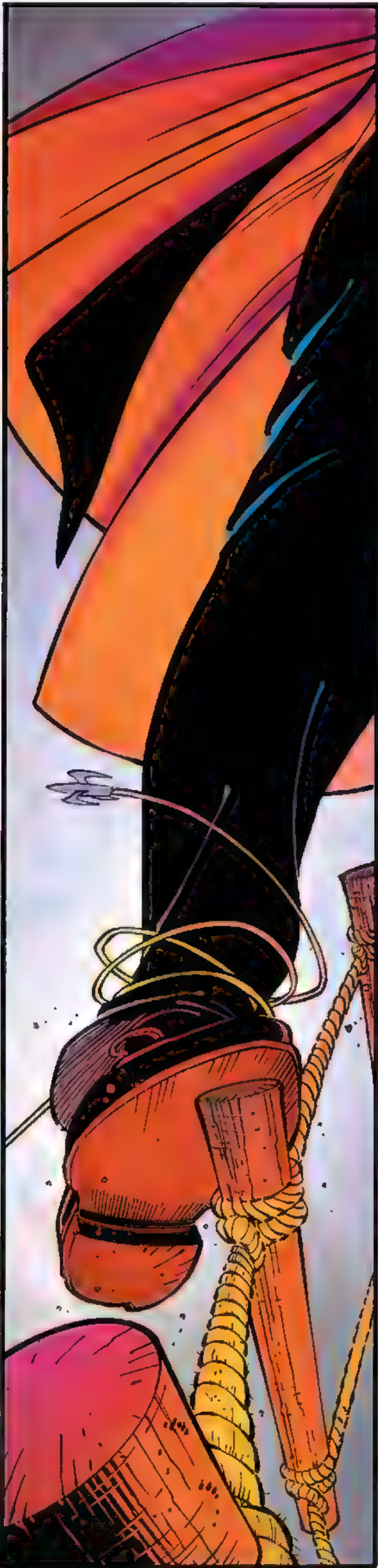
YOU WILL NOT LEAP, FLY, OR
HANG UPSIDE DOWN. YOU
WILL SURRENDER QUIETLY
OR I WILL **SHOOT** YOU. DO
YOU UNDERSTAND?

YO, IT'S
HIM!

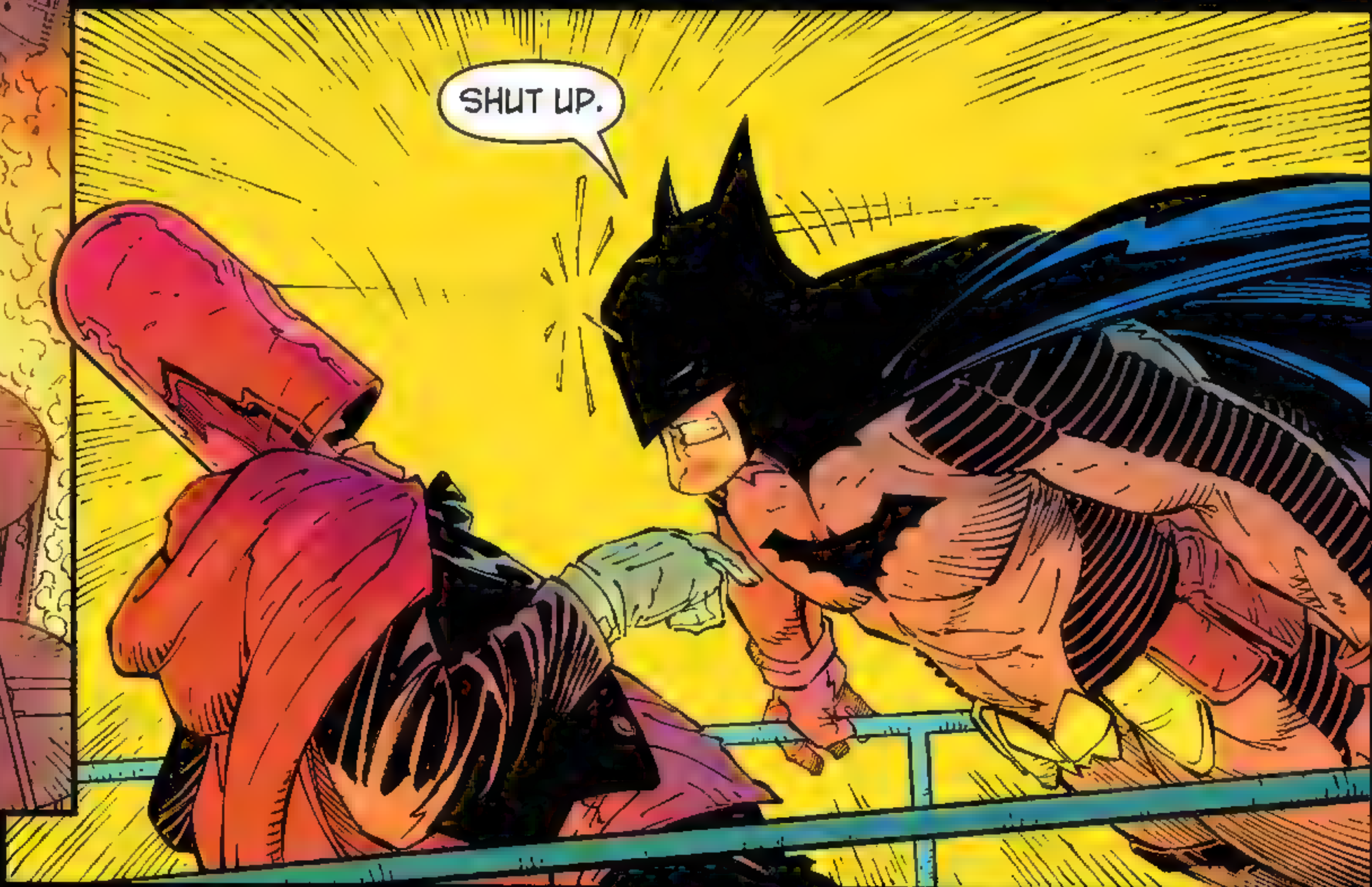
IT'S THE
BAT!





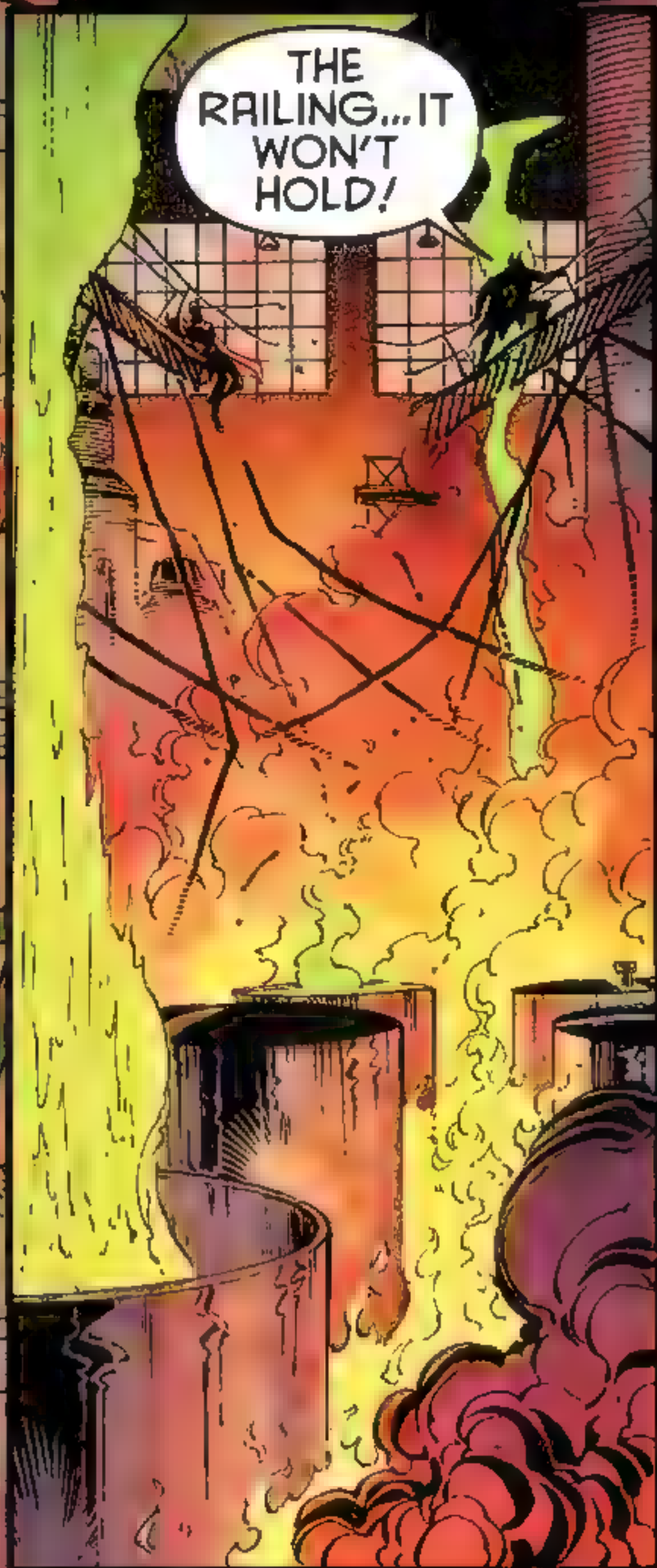








Heh. IT'S YOU UNDER THERE, ISN'T IT? MY LITTLE VIGILANTE. IT SEEMS YOU'VE... EVOLVED.



THE RAILING...IT WON'T HOLD!



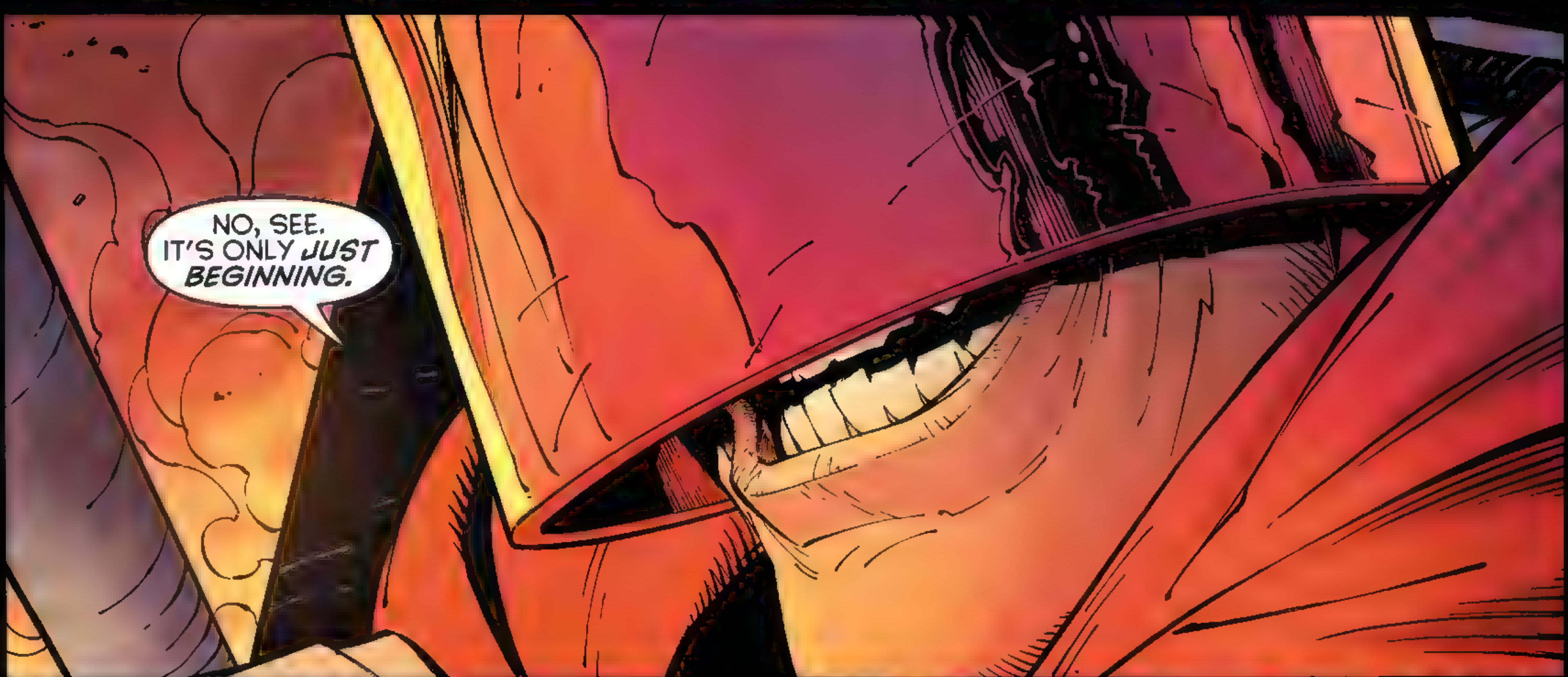
DAMMIT, GIVE ME YOUR HAND!

UNH- THAT'S NO KOFF FUN!

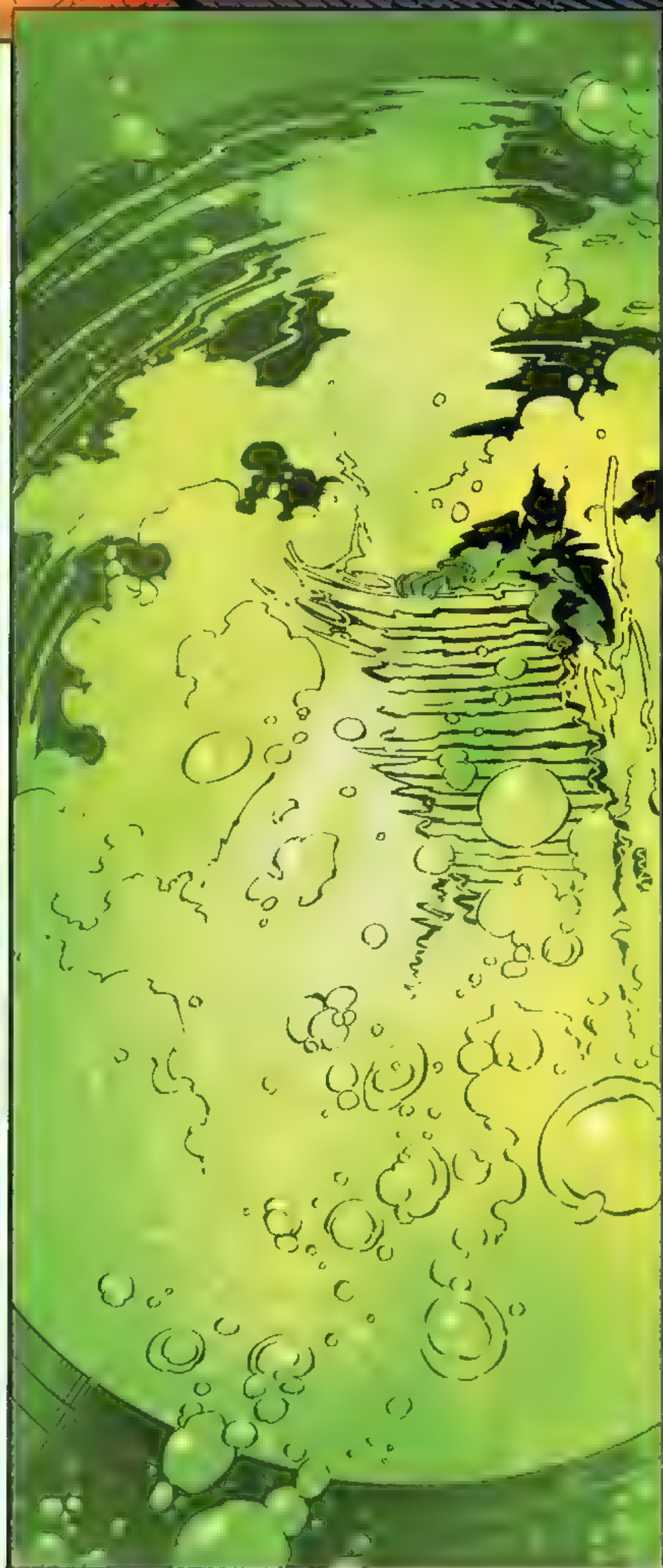


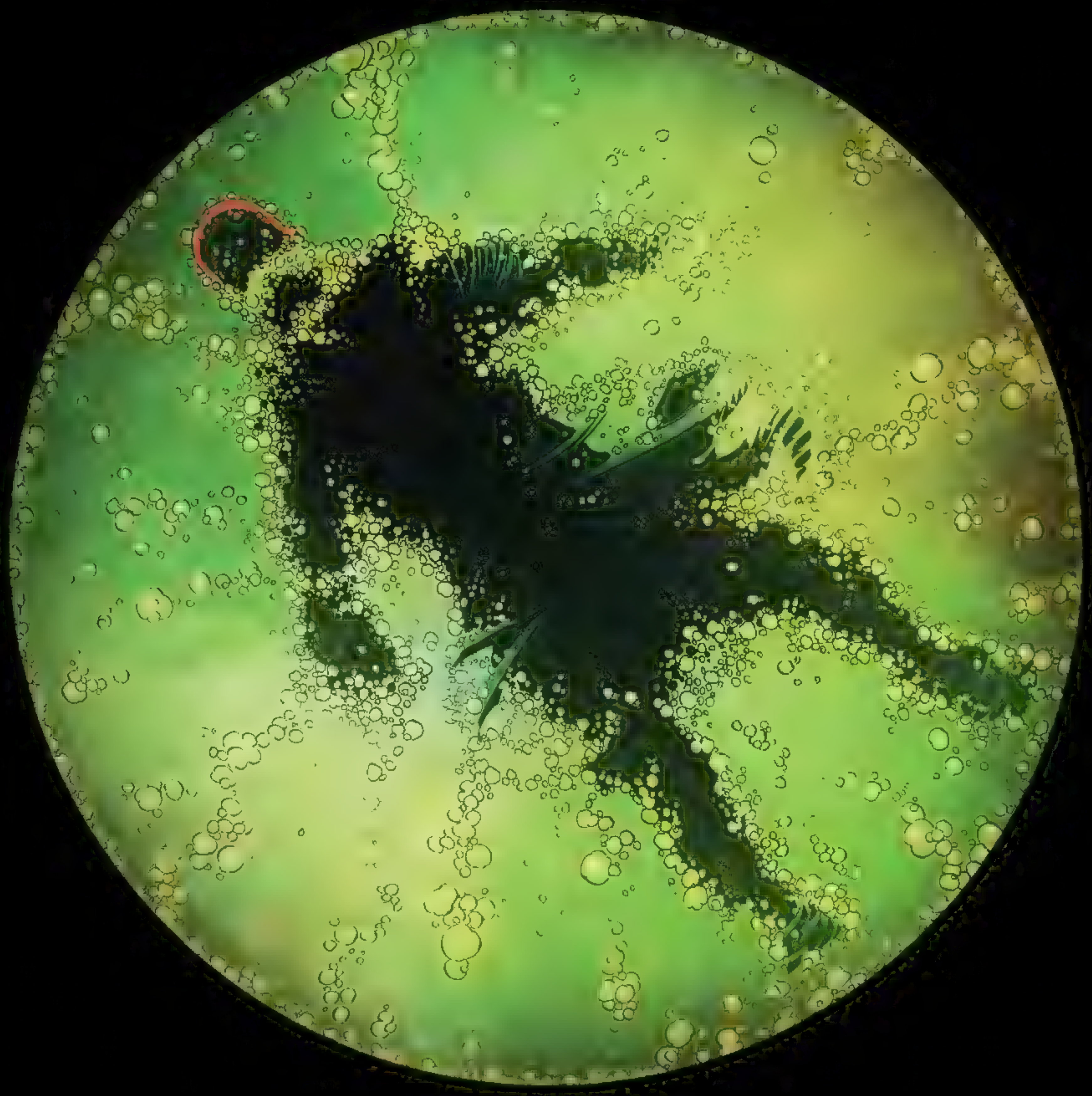
COME ON! NOW! IT'S OVER!

HA! WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO THINK SO?

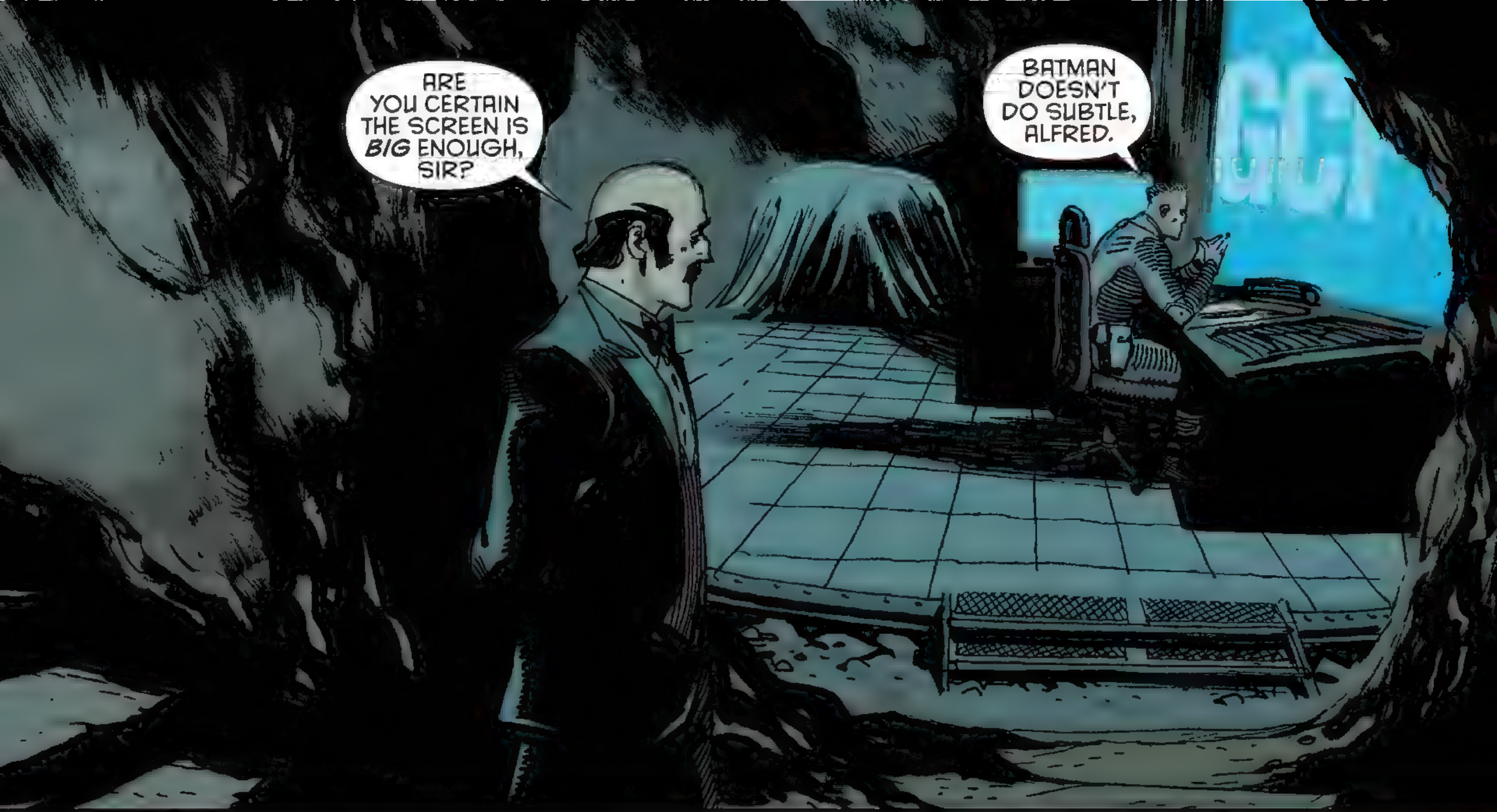


NO, SEE. IT'S ONLY JUST BEGINNING.



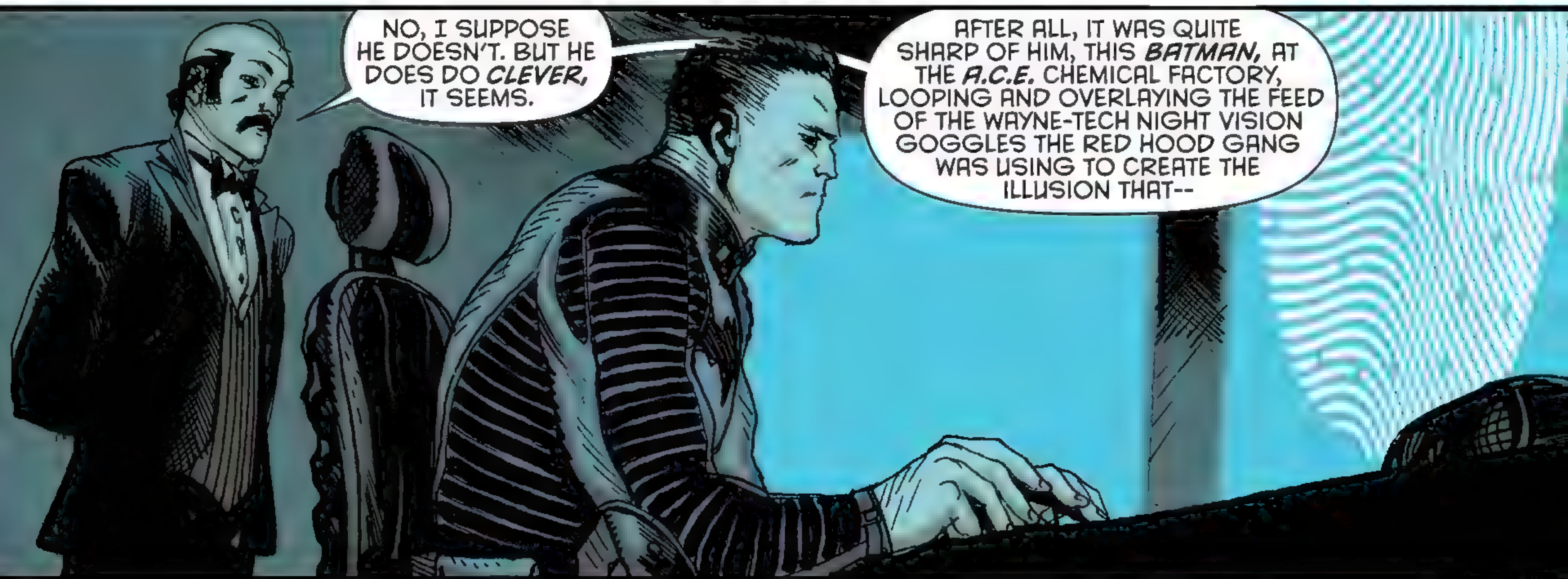






ARE YOU CERTAIN THE SCREEN IS *BIG* ENOUGH, SIR?

BATMAN DOESN'T DO SUBTLE, ALFRED.



NO, I SUPPOSE HE DOESN'T. BUT HE DOES DO *CLEVER*, IT SEEMS.

AFTER ALL, IT WAS QUITE SHARP OF HIM, THIS *BATMAN*, AT THE *A.C.E.* CHEMICAL FACTORY, LOOPING AND OVERLAYING THE FEED OF THE WAYNE-TECH NIGHT VISION GOGGLES THE RED HOOD GANG WAS USING TO CREATE THE ILLUSION THAT--



BRUCE WAYNE WAS STILL ON THE CATWALK? THANKS.

BATMAN'S LEGEND BEGINS WITH THE RESCUE OF BRUCE WAYNE. THEIR *SEPARATION* IS CEMENTED INTO THE FOUNDATION OF THE MYTHOS.



~Sigh~
THAT'S THE IDEA,
AT LEAST. STILL, PART
OF ME GIVES IT ABOUT
A **WEEK** BEFORE
THEY FIGURE
IT OUT.

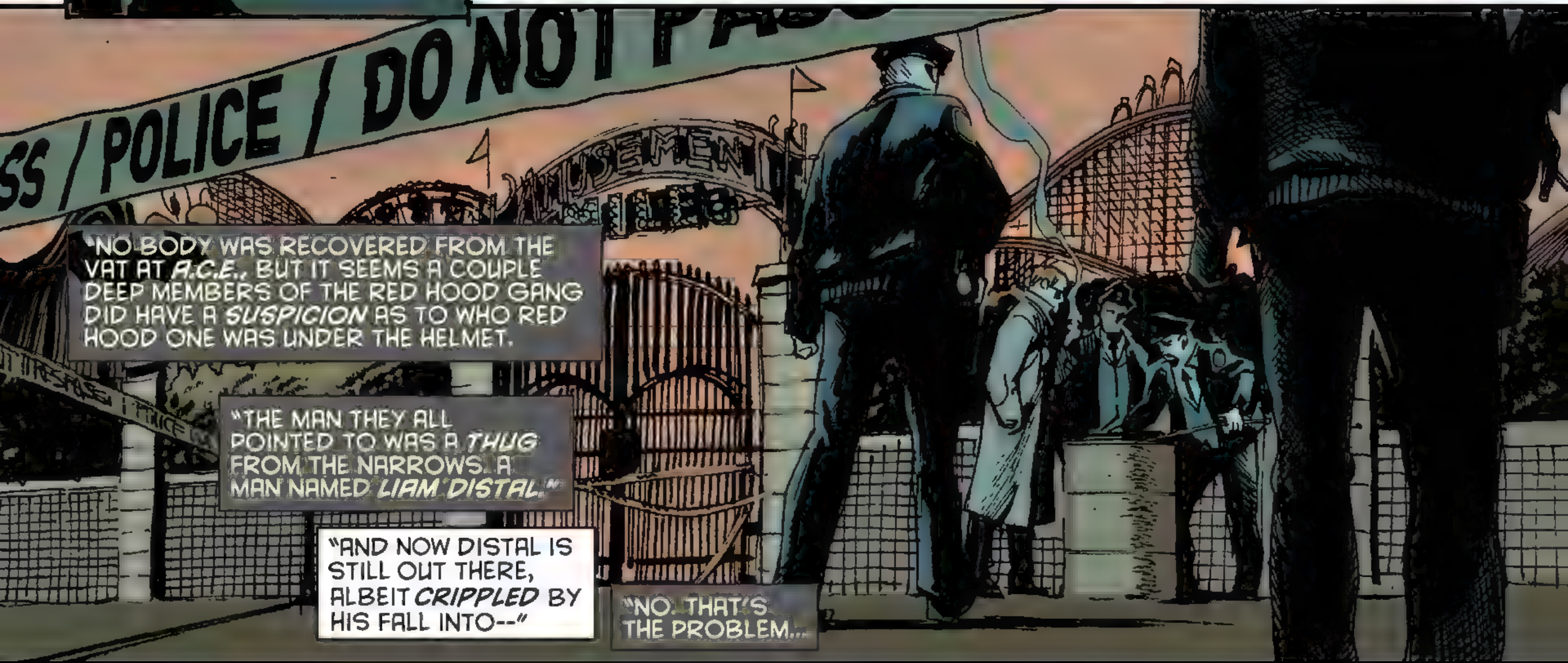
YOU'RE
SHARING THE
JAIL CELL WITH ME,
YOU KNOW, WHEN
THEY SLAM THE
DOOR.

FAIR ENOUGH. SPEAKING
OF CLOSING THE DOOR ON
MATTERS, I SEE THE POLICE
HAVE DISCOVERED THE
IDENTITY OF THE RED
HOOD LEADER.

I'M RELIEVED
YOU CAN PUT THAT
MATTER TO REST,
FINALLY.

UN-
FORTUNATELY,
IT'S NOT THAT
SIMPLE.

OH?



"NO BODY WAS RECOVERED FROM THE
VAT AT **A.C.E.**, BUT IT SEEMS A COUPLE
DEEP MEMBERS OF THE RED HOOD GANG
DID HAVE A **SUSPICION** AS TO WHO RED
HOOD ONE WAS UNDER THE HELMET.

"THE MAN THEY ALL
POINTED TO WAS A **THUG**
FROM THE **NARROWS**. A
MAN NAMED **LIAM DISTAL**."

"AND NOW DISTAL IS
STILL OUT THERE,
ALBEIT **CRIPPLED** BY
HIS FALL INTO--"

"NO. THAT'S
THE PROBLEM..."



"...LIAM DISTAL'S **BODY** WAS
DISCOVERED YESTERDAY. IT
WAS STUFFED INTO A BARREL
OF LYE OUT BY AMUSEMENT
MILE."

"**LYE?**"

"EXACTLY. THE LYE DISSOLVED
THE BETTER PART OF HIS
REMAINS. MEANING THERE'S
NO WAY TO TELL **WHEN** HE WAS
KILLED AND PLACED THERE."

"SO YOU'RE
SAYING--"

"I'M SAYING THAT IT'S ALL A *MYSTERY*, ALFRED

"ALL WE KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT AT SOME POINT IN THE PAST YEAR, *SOMEONE* MURDERED DISTAL, THE *ORIGINAL* RED HOOD LEADER, AND TOOK HIS PLACE.

"WHETHER THAT HAPPENED MONTHS AGO, WEEKS AGO, OR JUST *DAYS* AGO, WE CAN'T BE SURE.

"MEANING, FOR ALL I KNOW, THE MAN I'VE BEEN FACING DOWN THESE PAST FEW WEEKS WAS SWITCHED OUT FOR SOME *PATSY* READING HIS LINES THE DAY OF THE *A.C.E.* CHEM STANDOFF.

"OR, DISTAL COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED *WEEKS* AGO, AND THE MAN I'VE BEEN FACING IS THE SAME ONE WHO FELL INTO THAT VAT AT *A.C.E.*... THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING.

"HELL, THERE'S EVEN A CHANCE THE MAN I CHASED UP ON TO THE ROOF OF *A.C.E.* SWITCHED PLACES WITH AN IMPOSTER, SOME POOR FALL GUY, WHILE THE *REAL* RED HOOD LEADER, THE ONE WHO KILLED DISTAL, CLIMBED DOWN A FIRE ESCAPE AND FLED."

"NOW YOU'RE JUST PLAYING MULTIPLE CHOICE WITH POSSIBILITIES, SIR."

AND AFTER ALL, WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THE RED HOOD GANG IS *FINISHED*. CORRECT?

SIR?

...

YOU KNOW...

...THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER, ABOUT THE CITIZENS OF THIS CITY FIGURING OUT THE *CONNECTION* BETWEEN BRUCE WAYNE AND BATMAN, I HAVE TO SAY, I'M NOT SO CERTAIN THEY *WILL*.

AND WHY IS THAT?

WELL, WHEN I BEGAN IN *THEATER* AS A YOUNG MAN, I REMEMBER BEING VERY CONCERNED WITH THE VERISIMILITUDE OF EVERY CHARACTER I PLAYED.

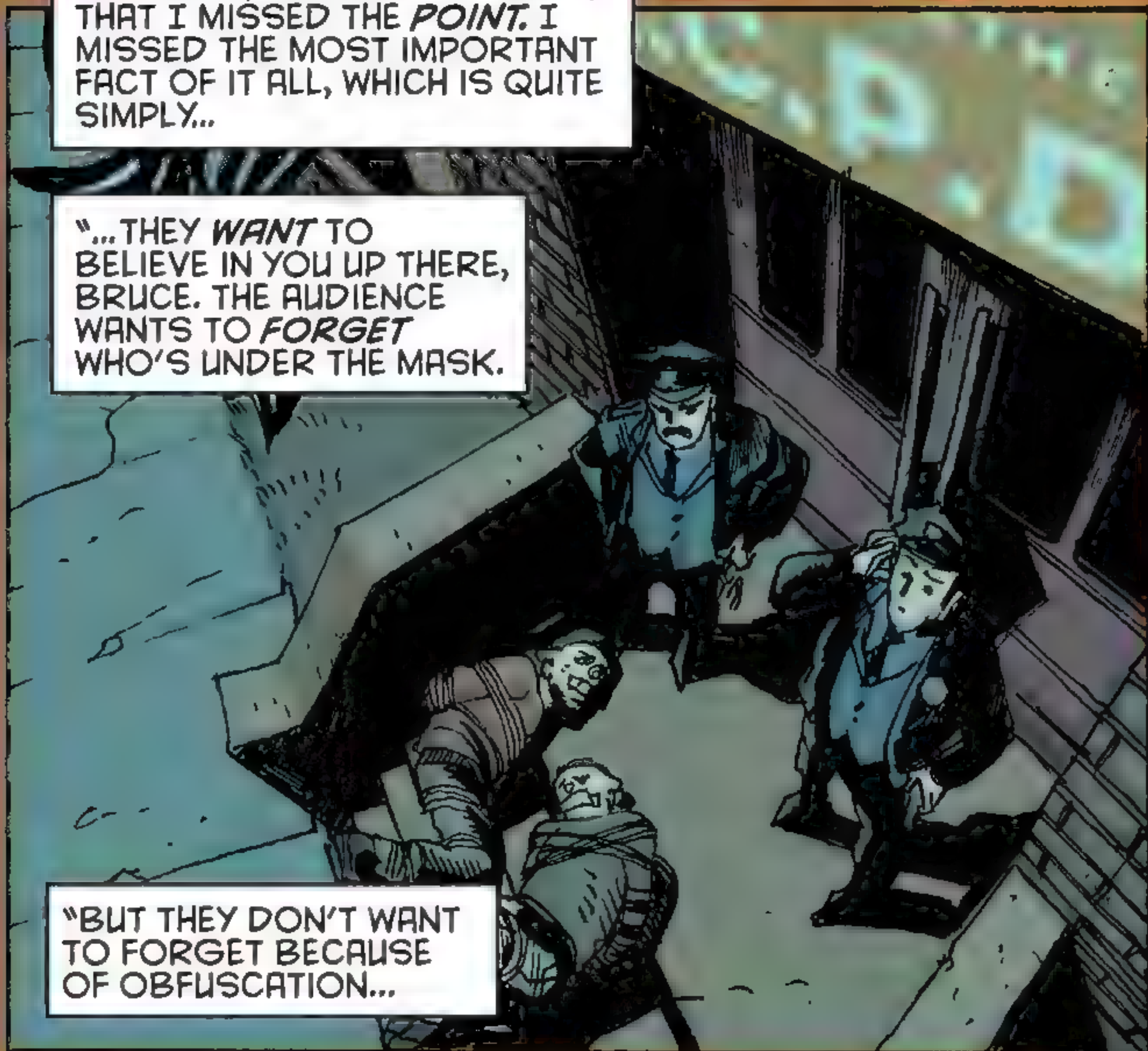
WAS I USING THE CORRECT *DIALECT*? WAS MY *COSTUME* ACCURATE? AND I REMEMBER GOING ON STAGE, SO PREOCCUPIED WITH THESE SORTS OF EFFORTS--EFFORTS TO OBSCURE THE FACT THAT IT WAS JUST ME, A YOUNG MAN FROM YORK THEY WERE WATCHING, THAT I KEPT FAILING UP THERE. FAILING MISERABLY, TOO.



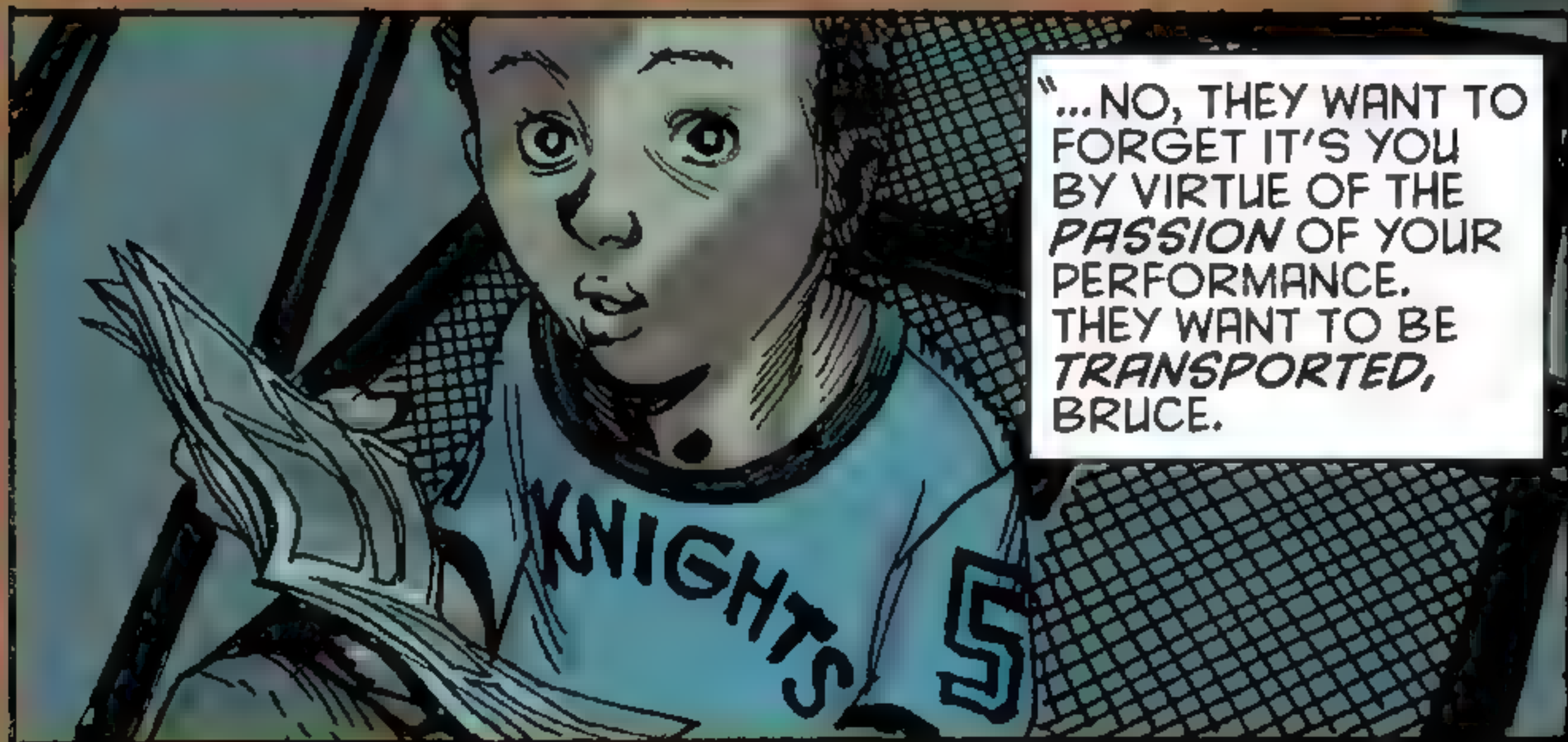
"I WAS JUST SO *AFRAID*, BRUCE.

"SO AFRAID OF BEING SEEN THROUGH, OF BEING *CAUGHT*, THAT I MISSED THE *POINT*. I MISSED THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT OF IT ALL, WHICH IS QUITE SIMPLY...

"...THEY *WANT* TO BELIEVE IN YOU UP THERE, BRUCE. THE AUDIENCE WANTS TO *FORGET* WHO'S UNDER THE MASK.



"BUT THEY DON'T WANT TO FORGET BECAUSE OF OBFUSCATION...



"...NO, THEY WANT TO FORGET IT'S YOU BY VIRTUE OF THE *PASSION* OF YOUR PERFORMANCE. THEY WANT TO BE *TRANSPORTED*, BRUCE.




"TRANSPORTED TO A WORLD WHERE BIGGER TRUTHS ARE AT WORK, AND ANYTHING--*ANYTHING*--CAN HAPPEN. A WORLD WHERE THE *IMPOSSIBLE* IS POSSIBLE.



"BATMAN CAN BE SOMETHING LIKE THAT FOR THEM, BRUCE. SOMEONE *TRANSPORTING*.

"SOMEONE WHO *DEFIES* EVERY DAMN RULE OF LOGIC THAT GOVERNS THEIR LIVES."

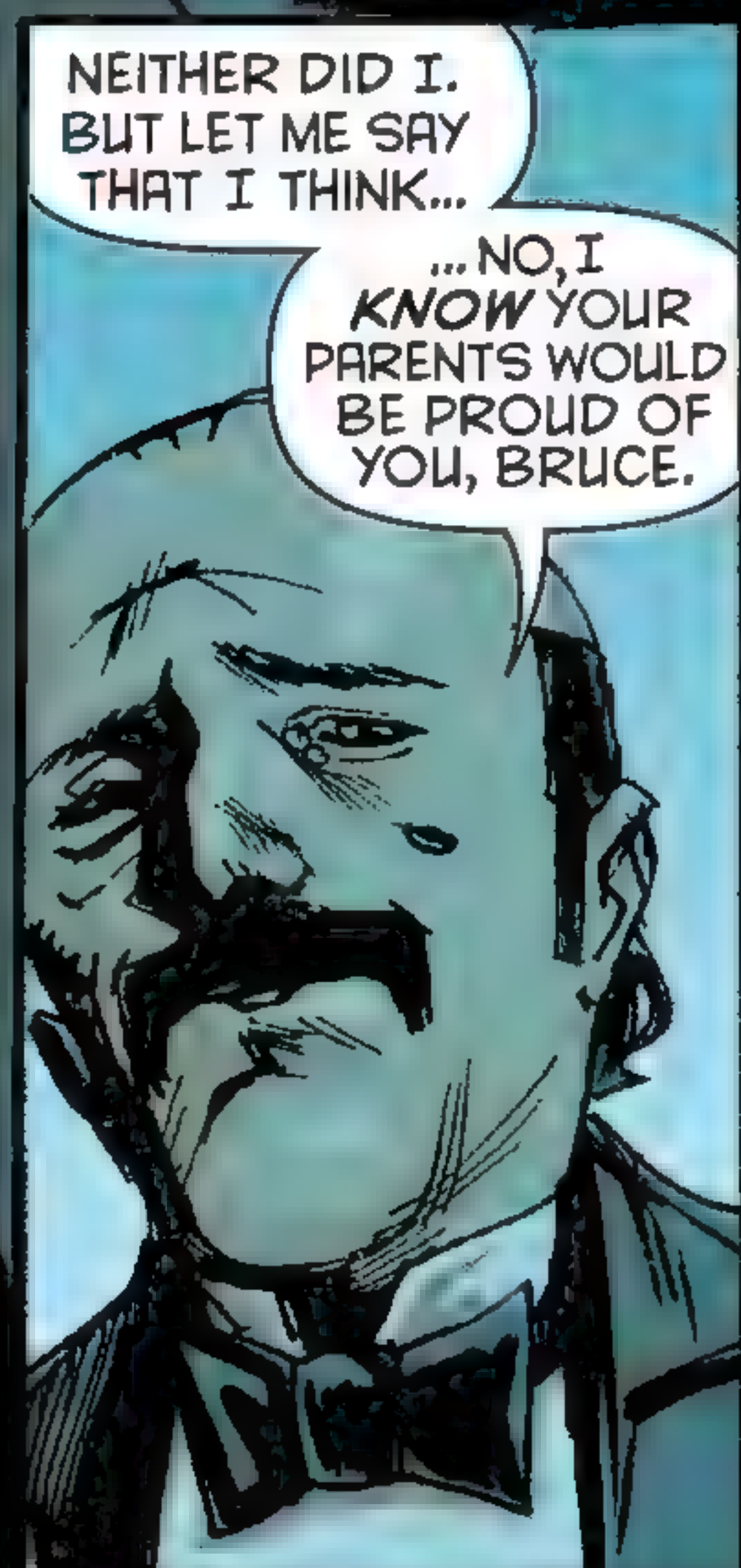


WHAT I'M SAYING IS, IF YOU PLAY BATMAN RIGHT, THEY WON'T *WANT* TO FIGURE OUT WHO'S BENEATH THE COWL.

THAT'S THE KEY. AND YOU'RE DOING IT. YOU'RE PLAYING HIM BEAUTIFULLY, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.




ALFRED. I... I NEVER SAID I'M SORRY.



NEITHER DID I. BUT LET ME SAY THAT I THINK...

...NO, I *KNOW* YOUR PARENTS WOULD BE PROUD OF YOU, BRUCE.



YOU'RE *STILL* SHARING THE JAIL CELL WITH ME.

AND THAT'S "*MASTER* BRUCE", ALFRED. SOME ETIQUETTE, PLEASE.



Heh. FORGIVE ME, SIR. I--



AHEM, AHEM! WELL HELLLLO, GOTHAM!



WHAT THE...?



HELLO,
YOU!



AND
YOU DOWN
THERE!

HELLO, ALL
OF YOU! MY NAME,
IN CASE YOU'RE
WONDERING, IS NYGMA!
EDWARD NYGMA!
BUT YOU CAN
CALL ME...



...THE
RIDDLER.

AND I AM
HERE TO MAKE
YOU SMARTER! IT'S
MY MISSION, MY
CALLING. MY
DUTY.

SO
LET'S START,
SHALL WE?
NOW...

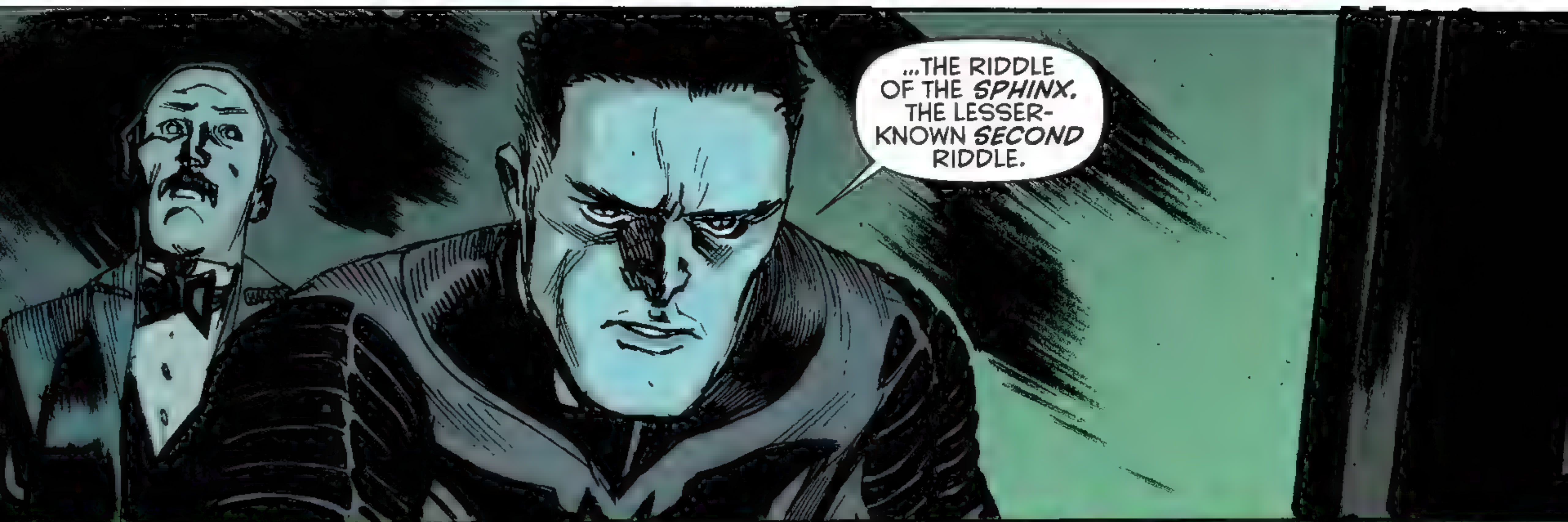
...RIDDLE
ME THIS,
GOTHAM!

THERE ARE
TWO SISTERS,
EACH GIVES BIRTH
TO THE OTHER.
WHO ARE
THEY?

NO?
I'LL GIVE
YOU A
HINT!

IT'S
THE RIDDLE
OF...





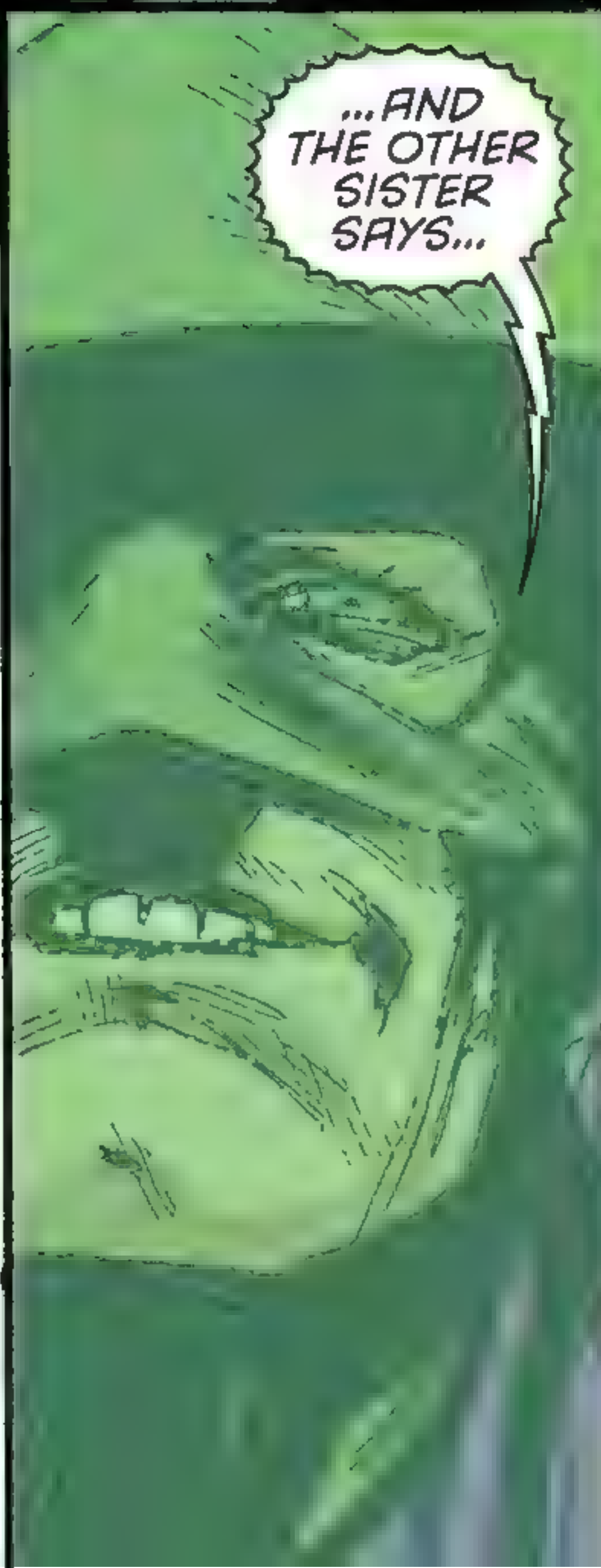
...THE RIDDLE
OF THE *SPHINX*.
THE LESSER-
KNOWN *SECOND*
RIDDLE.



HERE'S
YOUR HINT.
ONE SISTER
SAYS...



...I
AM THE
DAY...

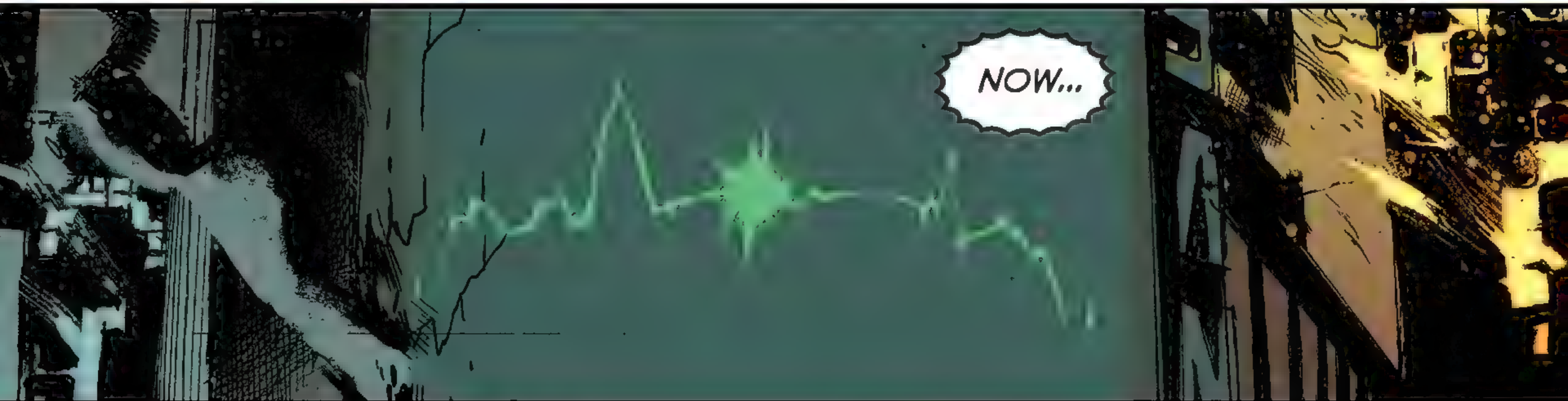


...AND
THE OTHER
SISTER
SAYS...



I
AM THE
NIGHT.







DC
COMICS™

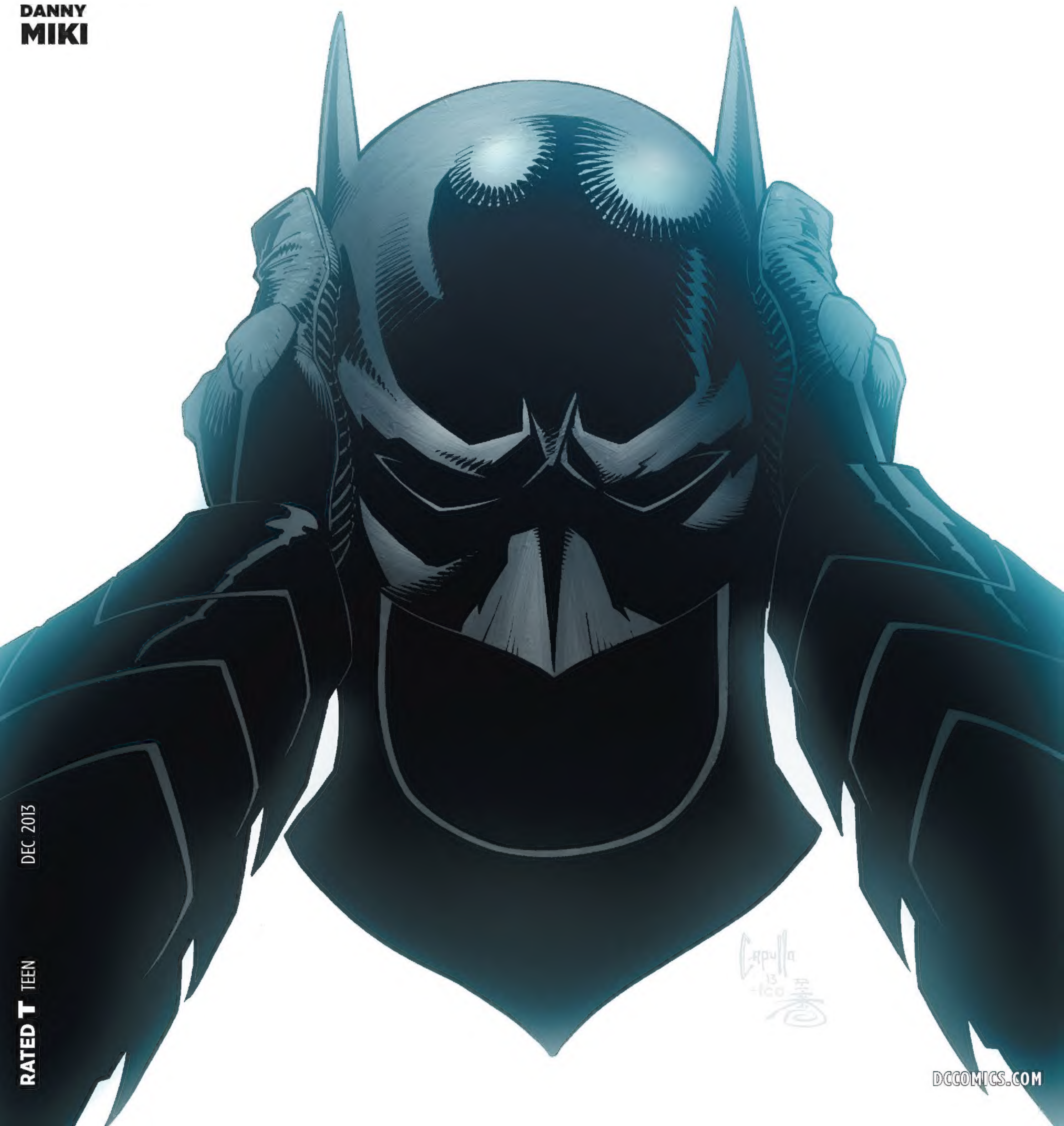
24

SCOTT
SNYDER
GREG
CAPULLO
DANNY
MIKI

ZERO YEAR



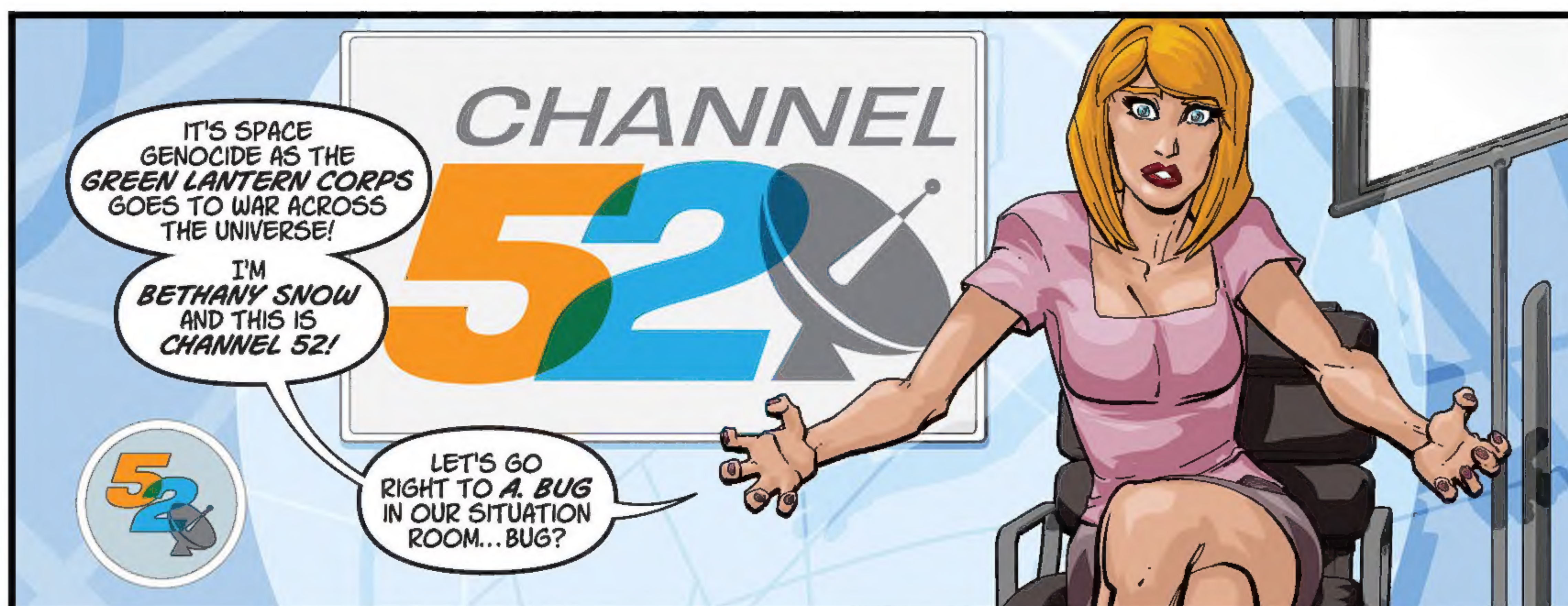
THE NEW 52!



DEC 2013

RATED **T** TEEN

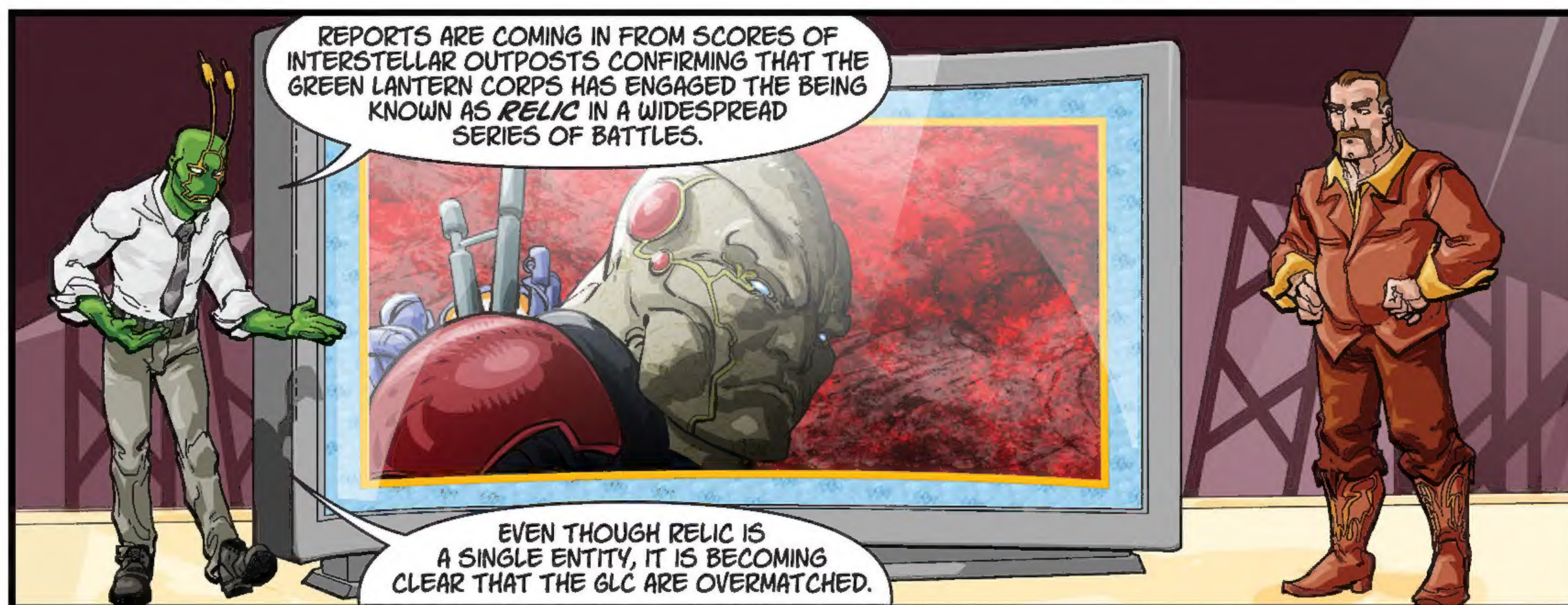
DCCOMICS.COM



IT'S SPACE GENOCIDE AS THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS GOES TO WAR ACROSS THE UNIVERSE!

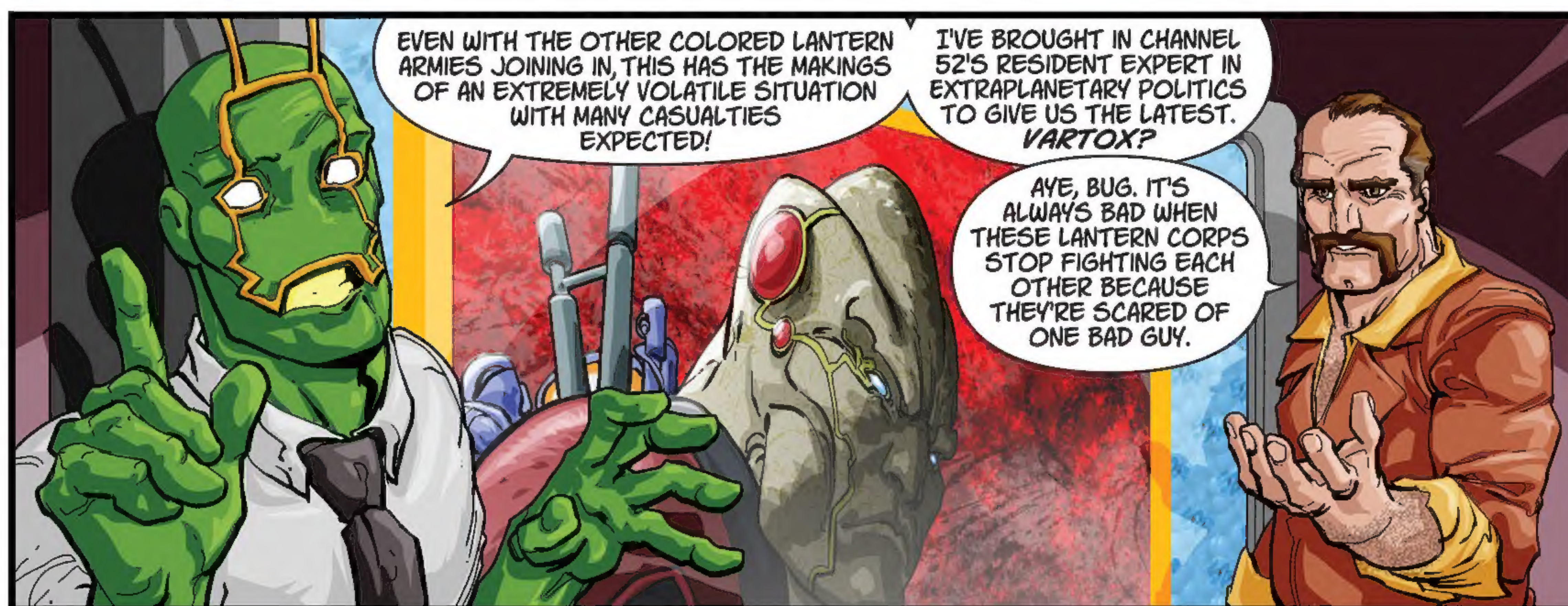
I'M BETHANY SNOW AND THIS IS CHANNEL 52!

LET'S GO RIGHT TO A. BUG IN OUR SITUATION ROOM...BUG?



REPORTS ARE COMING IN FROM SCORES OF INTERSTELLAR OUTPOSTS CONFIRMING THAT THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS HAS ENGAGED THE BEING KNOWN AS *RELIC* IN A WIDESPREAD SERIES OF BATTLES.

EVEN THOUGH RELIC IS A SINGLE ENTITY, IT IS BECOMING CLEAR THAT THE GLC ARE OVERMATCHED.



EVEN WITH THE OTHER COLORED LANTERN ARMIES JOINING IN, THIS HAS THE MAKINGS OF AN EXTREMELY VOLATILE SITUATION WITH MANY CASUALTIES EXPECTED!

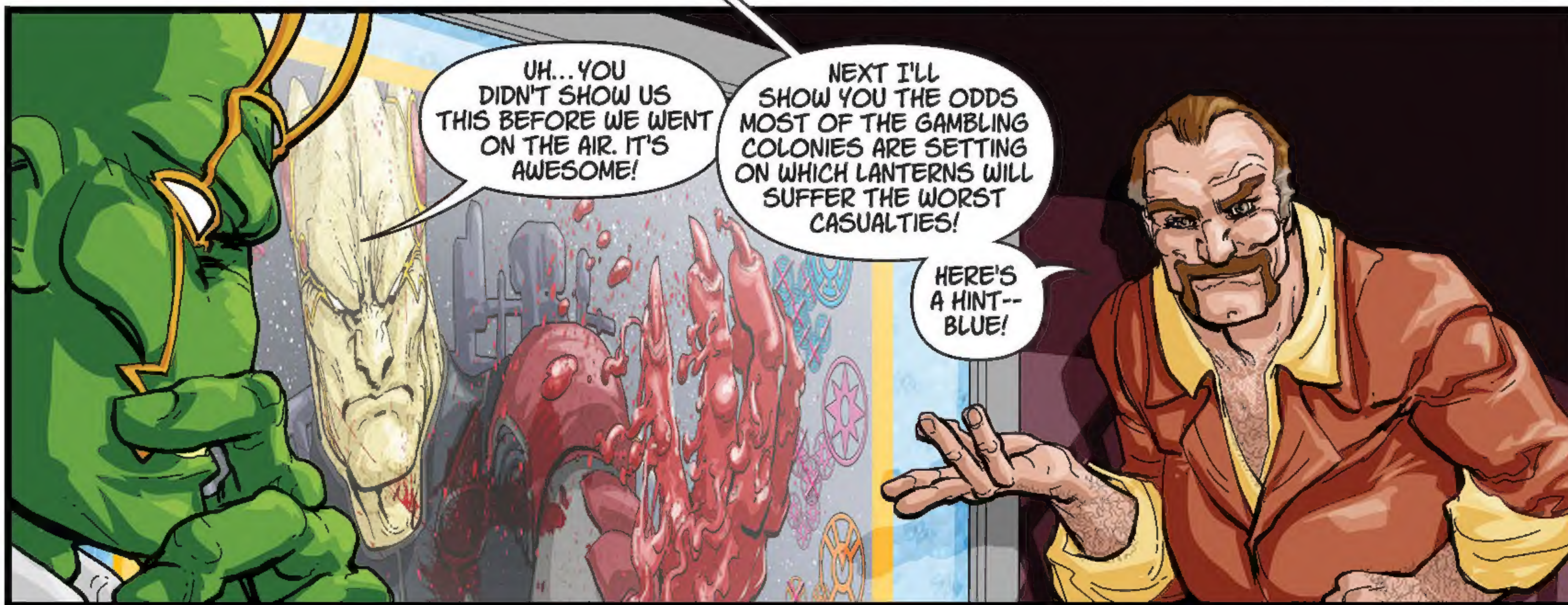
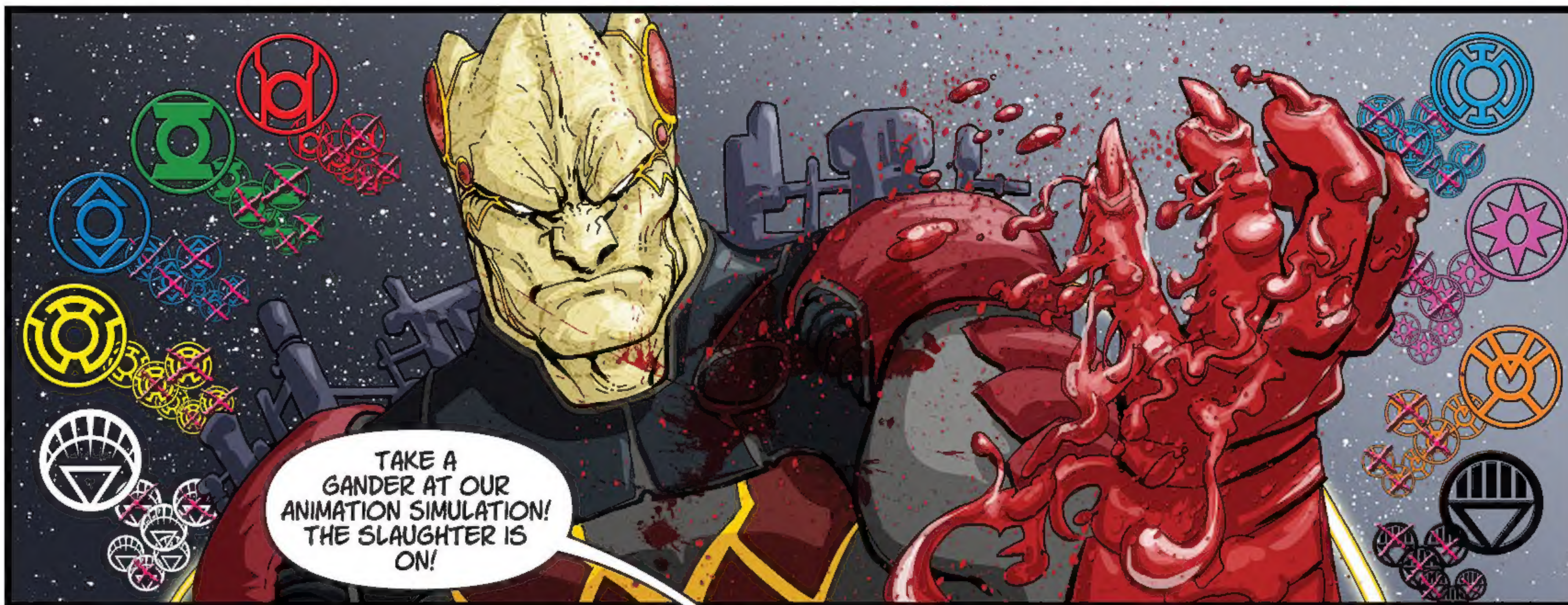
I'VE BROUGHT IN CHANNEL 52'S RESIDENT EXPERT IN EXTRAPLANETARY POLITICS TO GIVE US THE LATEST. *VARTOX?*

AYE, BUG. IT'S ALWAYS BAD WHEN THESE LANTERN CORPS STOP FIGHTING EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEY'RE SCARED OF ONE BAD GUY.



WHAT I CAN TELL OUR VIEWERS IS THAT RELIC'S MISSION IS THE TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF EACH LANTERN CORPS.

THE PROBLEM HERE IS WHAT HAPPENS IF THE LANTERNS FAIL? COULD EARTH BE RELIC'S NEXT TARGET?





ZONE